

LECTURES

John ON THE *Peterson*
SACRED POETRY *1792*
Auldearn *1810*
OF THE

HEBREW S;

TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN OF THE

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TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

THE PRINCIPAL NOTES OF PROFESSOR MICHAELIS, AND
NOTES BY THE TRANSLATOR AND OTHERS.

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LECTURES

ON THE

SACRED POETRY

OF THE

HEBREW

TRANSLATED BY THE LADY OF THE

MISTRESS ROBERT POWELL

LATE FELLOW OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

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C O N T E N T S

TO THE

S E C O N D V O L U M E.

THE THIRD PART.

OF THE DIFFERENT SPECIES OF POETRY EXTANT
IN THE WRITINGS OF THE HEBREWS.

OF PROPHETIC POETRY.

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L E C T U R E S

ON THE

SACRED POETRY

OF THE

H E B R E W S.

P A R T III.

OF THE DIFFERENT SPECIES OF POETRY

**EXTANT IN THE WRITINGS OF THE
HEBREWS.**

OF PROPHETIC POETRY.

LECTURE XVIII.

THE WRITINGS OF THE PROPHETS ARE IN GENERAL POETICAL.

The poetry of the Hebrews classed according to its different characters; this mode of arrangement results rather from the nature of the subject, than from any authority of the Hebrews themselves.—The PROPHETIC POETRY.—The writings of the prophets in general poetical and metrical.—The opinion of the modern Jews and of Jerome on this point refuted.—In the books of the prophets the same evidences are found of a metrical arrangement as in the poetical books: in the dialect, the style, and poetical conformation of the sentences.—Obvious in respect to the two former circumstances; the latter requires a more minute investigation, and also illustration by examples.—The intimate relation between Poetry and Prophecy.—The college of Prophets; a part of whose discipline it was to sing Hymns to the different instruments; and this exercise was called prophecy: the same word, therefore, denotes a prophet, a poet, and a musician.—Elisha, when about to pronounce the Oracle of God, orders a minstrel to be brought to him.—Poetry excellently adapted to the purpose of prophecy.—A review of the most ancient predictions extant in the historical books, which are proved to be truly poetical.

OF the general nature and properties of the Hebrew poetry I have already treated: diffusely enough, if the extent of the disquisitions be considered; but too briefly, I fear, and too imperfectly, if respect be

be had to the copiousness and importance of the subject. My original design, however, extended no farther than to notice the most remarkable passages, and such as I conceived to be immediately illustrative of the peculiarities of the Hebrew style. Even these it was my wish and intention rather to point out and recommend to your own consideration, than minutely to investigate and explain, esteeming it my province rather to exhort and stimulate to these studies, than to intrude upon this audience a formal plan of instruction. It would be superfluous, I am persuaded, to remind you, that the importance of the subject is not to be estimated by the feebleness of my endeavours; and, I trust, it would be still more unnecessary to caution you against a hasty acquiescence in any interpretation of those passages, which I have quoted, much less in my own: though I will frankly confess, that I have bestowed no small degree of labour and attention upon this part of my undertaking. What remains at present, is to distribute into its different classes the whole of the Hebrew poetry, and to mark whatever is worthy of observation in each species. In

forming this arrangement it will hardly be expected that I should uniformly proceed according to the testimony of the Hebrews, or on all occasions confirm the propriety of my classification by their authority; since it is plain that they were but little versed in these nice and artificial distinctions. It will be sufficient for our purpose; that is, it will be sufficient for the accurate explanation of the different characters of the Hebrew poetry, if I demonstrate that these characters are stamped by the hand of nature, and that they are displayed either in the subject itself, the disposition of its constituent parts, the diversity of style, or in the general form and arrangement of the poem.

The first rank I assign to the PROPHEMIC, or that species of poetry which is found to pervade the predictions of the prophets, as well those contained in the books properly called prophetic, as those which occasionally occur in other parts of the Scriptures. These, I apprehend, will be generally allowed to be written in a style truly poetical, indeed admirable in its kind; as the many examples, which we have already produced, will sufficiently demonstrate. I fear, however, it will
not

not be so readily granted that their claim is equally well-founded with that of the books, which are commonly called poetical, to the other characteristic of poetry, I mean verse, or metrical composition. This fact is denied by the Jews¹; and is denied by Jerome², who was a diligent scholar of the Rabbinical writers: after these, it is unnecessary to refer to more recent authors, who partly deny that the Hebrews were possessed of any metre at all, and partly allow it to those

¹ ABARBANEL distinguishes three species of canticles. The first is the *rythmical*, or that with similar endings; in use among the more modern Hebrews (who learned it from the Arabic writers) but which was certainly unknown to the authors of the Holy Scriptures. The second was adapted to music, and sung either alone or accompanied with instruments, such are the songs of Moses, of Deborah, of David. The third species consists of parables, or proverbs, which species, says he (though by the way absurdly enough, as is not uncommon with the Rabbinical writers) is properly denominated *Shir*. From this class, however, he excludes the parables of the prophets, according to the distinction of Maimonides between prophecy and the Holy Spirit. (See *More Neboc.* ii. 45.) He says they are not canticles, because they are not the work of the prophet himself, but the mere effect of the prophetic inspiration. *Mantissa Dissert. ad Libr. COSRI*, p. 413. *Author's Note.*

² See JEROME, preface to ISAIAH.

compositions only, which are commonly called poetical, or at most extend the concession to a few canticles scattered through other parts of the Scriptures. A thinking person, however, will not be misled by such authorities as these, before he examines whether they are to be accounted competent judges in this case, and what weight and credit is due to their testimony.

The Jews, by their own confession, are no longer, nor have been indeed for many ages, masters of the system of the ancient metre. All remembrance of it has ceased from those times in which the Hebrew became a dead language³; and it really seems probable, that the Masorites (of whom so little is known) who afterwards distinguished the sacred volumes by accents and vowel points, as they are now extant, were possessed of so trifling and imperfect a knowledge of this subject, that they were even incapable of distinguishing what was written in metre from plain prose. For when, ac-

³ "It cannot be doubted that the Canticles of the second species were possessed of a certain melody or metre, which through the length of the captivity is become obsolete." ARABANEL, *ib.* 410.

cording to their manner, they marked certain books as metrical, namely, the Psalms, the Proverbs, and the book of Job; they accounted others, which are no less evidently metrical, absolutely prosaick, such as the Song of Solomon, and the Lamentations of Jeremiah, and consequently assigned to them the common prose accent only. In this opinion the Jews universally remain, and deny that these books are at all metrical, or to be classed with the three former*. Now the disciple

* The Song of Solomon is indeed allowed by the Jews to be a poem; not however from the nature of the composition, or from its being metrical, but merely because it is of the parabolic kind: and therefore it is referred by ABARBANEL to the third species of Cantic. Whence it happens that, though in some MSS. copies the three metrical books are written in a versified form, the Lamentations and Song of Songs are differently transcribed. This I have observed to be the case with the Vatican MS. which is deservedly accounted one of the most ancient, its date being the year DCCCCLXXIX of our Christian æra. The same is observable in many other MSS. as I have been informed by my learned friend, Dr. KENNICOT, whose HEBREW BIBLE WITH THE VARIOUS READINGS is now in the press, and already in great forwardness. Indeed, it is natural to suppose, that when the Jews exhibit certain Canticles, and even whole books in a poetical or versified order, they followed, or pretended

disciple is hardly to be supposed to have more information than his masters; and although Jerome speaks very fluently about the Tetrameters, the Hexameters, the Sapphics, and Iambics of the Hebrews, the very state and circumstances of the case demonstrate how little credit is due to his authority. Indeed his reasoning evidently proceeds from a confused

to follow the true nature of the Hebrew verse, or the proper distribution of the lines. But the great disagreement between them in this respect is a proof of their ignorance, for they seldom agree with one another in the termination of the lines, or follow any determinate rule in this matter. The distribution of the verses is different in different copies, as may be immediately observed on comparing them. In the Song of Moses, DEUT. xxxii. in which the different editions agree better than in any other (and indeed there was but little room for disagreement, the sense always pointing out of itself the order of the sentences) in this, notwithstanding, the Rabbies have contrived to differ, some of them dividing it into 67, and some into 70 verses or lines. See *Annot. ad Bib. Heb.* Edit. MICHAELIS, Halæ 1720. Among the MSS. copies of the metrical books the disagreement is equally manifest, as the above excellent critic proved upon a very strict examination, undertaken at my request. In a very famous MS. which I saw in the Royal Library at Dresden, I remarked a circumstance that clearly demonstrates the perfect ignorance and absurdity of the Jews in this respect.

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confused head, when he attempts to trace a sort of remote similitude between the Greek and Hebrew metres; and to explain by some coarse analogies a subject, which he appears to have very imperfectly understood: in treating of which, after all, he is not able to preserve even the appearance of consistency. For instance, after Josephus and Origen, he contends⁵, that the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy is composed in Hexameter and Pentameter verse; in another place, however, he affirms that the very same poem consists of Iambic Tetrameters⁶. In proof of his

The Chaldee paraphrase was intermingled with the text throughout, in such a manner, that we first read the Hebrew, and then the Chaldee, verse by verse alternately: in the metrical books, which were divided into lines or verses, the text and version were so confounded, that the writer attending only to the equality of his lines, perpetually blended the Hebrew and Chaldee together in such a manner, that where the one ended the other was resumed, and every line partook of both. This is a very elegant copy, and probably five hundred years old. The punctuation is evidently of a more recent date; as in that of the Vatican abovementioned, and in some other copies still older. *Author's Note.*

⁵ Preface to Chron.

⁶ Epist. clv. ad Paulam Urbicam.

opinion he appeals to the testimony of Philo, Josephus, Origen, and Eusebius⁷, who were no less ignorant of the nature of the Hebrew metres than himself. Notwithstanding the opinion therefore of Jerome and the Rabbinical writers, I shall beg leave to offer a few remarks upon the other side of the question; after which it will not perhaps be thought altogether improbable, that most of the predictions of the prophets, as well as many other of the remains of Hebrew literature, were originally published in a metrical form.

In order to prove that the predictions of the prophets are metrical, I must in part have recourse to the same arguments, by which I formerly endeavoured to evince that the Hebrew poetry in general consisted of a kind of metre: every one of which arguments, I must observe, is strictly applicable to this part of my subject, that alone excepted which regards the alphabetic poems. That it would be unnatural and absurd to look for instances of that kind in the prophetic poetry is evident; since such an artificial arrangement would be utterly repug-

⁷ See JEROME, preface to Job.

nant to the nature of prophecy ; it is plainly the effect of study and diligence, not of imagination and enthusiasm ; a contrivance to assist the memory, not to affect the passions. The other arguments, however, ought to be particularly adverted to upon this subject : the poetic dialect for instance, the diction so totally different from the language of common life, and other similar circumstances *, which an attentive reader will easily discover, but which cannot be explained by a few examples ; for circumstances which, taken separately, appear but of small account, are in a united view frequently of the greatest importance. To these we may add the artificial conformation of the sentences ; which, as it has always appeared to me a necessary concomitant of metrical composition, the only one indeed which is now apparent, I shall afterwards endeavour to explain more at large, having especial regard to the prophetic writers. I must now premise a few other arguments, which will probably lead to the establishment of my opinion.

The prophets were chosen by God himself, and were certainly excellently prepared for

* See LECT. III.

the execution of their office. They were in general taken from those, who had been educated from childhood in a course of discipline adapted to the ministerial function. It is evident from many parts of the Sacred History, that even from the earliest times of the Hebrew Republic, there existed certain colleges of prophets, in which the candidates for the prophetic office, removed altogether from an intercourse with the world, devoted themselves entirely to the exercises and study of religion : over each of these some prophet of superior authority, and more peculiarly under the divine influence, presided, as the moderator and preceptor of the whole assembly. Though the Sacred History affords us but little information, and that in a cursory manner, concerning their institutes and discipline ; we nevertheless understand that a principal part of their occupation consisted in celebrating the praises of Almighty God in hymns and poetry, with choral chants accompanied by stringed instruments and pipes. There is a remarkable passage⁹ which occurs to this purpose : Saul being nominated King, and, pursuant to the command of God, con-

⁹ 1 SAM. X. 5—10.

secrated by a solemn unction, a company of the prophets, as Samuel had foretold, descending from the Mount of God (that being the place in which the sacred college was situated) met him; and, preceded by a variety of musical instruments, *prophefied*: upon hearing which, he himself, as if actuated by the same spirit, immediately joined them, and prophefied also. The same thing again occurred to him, and the persons sent by him to take David prisoner at Naioth¹⁰; who, when they saw the prophets prophefying, and Samuel presiding over them, seized with the same divine spirit and enthusiasm, began to prophefy along with them. I find no discordance among authors concerning the nature of this mode of prophefying: all are, I believe, agreed in this point, and all understand by it the praises of God celebrated, by the impulse of the Holy Spirit, with music and song. In this they follow the authority of the Chaldee interpreters, or rather the evidence of reason itself: for exactly in the same manner, Asaph, Heman, Iduthun, who were the chief musicians in the Temple, are said “to have prophefied upon the harp, the

10 1 SAM. XIX. 20—24.

“ psaltery,

“psaltery, and the cymbal, when praise and thanksgiving were offered to Jehovah.” From these instances it is sufficiently apparent, that the word *Nabi* was used by the Hebrews in an ambiguous sense, and that it equally denoted a Prophet, a Poet, or a Musician, under the influence of divine inspiration. To these we may add the prophetesses, Miriam the sister of Aaron, and Deborah, who were distinguished by that title, not only because they pronounced the oracles of Jehovah, but on account of their excellence in music and poetry; for these sister arts were united by the Hebrews, as well as by all other nations, during the first stages of society. After these proofs there can scarcely be any occasion to remark, that Solomon, or at least the editor or compiler of his proverbs, twice makes use of the word, which, in its ordinary sense, means prophecy, strictly so called, to denote the language of poetry. For he calls the words of Agur and Lemuel “

Massa,

“ I CHRON. XXV. 1—3.

“ The late Mr. Hallet of Exeter, in the second volume of his Notes and Discourses, p. 89, &c. hath advanced enough to shew that the existence of the two personages here

*Massa*¹³, which Jerome renders *vision*, the seventy Greek translators *an oracle*, the Chaldee *prophecy*: when in reality those passages have nothing in them which can be properly said to bear any resemblance to prophecy; but are mere rhapsodies of morality, ornament-

here mentioned is at least problematical. To the reputation of this excellent man (and perhaps it was his least praise) it deserves to be mentioned, that there is scarcely a conjectural emendation of the Hebrew text proposed by him, which was not afterwards found by Dr. Kennicot, in one manuscript or another, to have been an ancient reading. S. H.

¹³ *Massa*, which according to its etymology means *an oracular saying*, λογιον, is no more peculiar to predictions of future events, than to every species of that eloquence which is supposed to come by inspiration, including that which teaches the salutary principles of moral conduct. I do not therefore see much force in this argument of our author: for whatever Lemuel composed under the influence of the Divine Spirit might properly be called *massa*, whether in verse or not. The word is derived from *nasa*, he raised, he produced, he spoke; not as some of the old commentators derive it, from *nasa*, he received. Though a divine oracle might, I confess, take its name with great propriety from *receiving*, as does the Greek word λαμμα (so the Seventy render this very phrase) which means being *received* from God. But the use of the word in 2 KINGS ix. 25. militates against this derivation. M.

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ed indeed with the usual embellishments of poetry ¹⁴. The Hebrews certainly did not express by the same word ideas, which they deemed inconsistent, or repugnant to each other; and, what is remarkable, the same ambiguity prevails, the same word (and we may well presume for similar reasons) denotes both a Prophet and a Poet in the Arabic language, in the Greek, and in the Latin ¹⁵.

Nor is it reasonable to suppose, that Prophecy admitted Poetry and Music to a participation in the name alone; on the contrary, we find, that she did not disdain to unite herself with Harmony, and to accept of her assistance. The example of Elisha is remarkable ¹⁶, who, when about to pronounce the answer of the Most High to the inquiry of the two kings of Israel and Judah, orders a minstrel to be brought to him, and upon

¹⁴ PROV. xxx. 1. xxxi. 1. See also I CHRON. xv. 22. and 27. שֵׁר הַמִּשְׁחָה, αἰχμὴ τῆς ψαλμῆς, lxx.

¹⁵ *Mutenabbi*, Προφητης, Vates. See JOSEPH MEDE's Works, p. 59. TIT. i. 12. LUKE i. 67. and HAMMOND on the passage. *Author's Note.*

¹⁶ 2 KINGS iii. 15.

his striking the harp, is immediately agitated by the Holy Spirit¹⁷. Many commentators have indeed supposed that the Prophet applied to music only to sooth the perturbation of his mind; in this they follow an opinion of some of the more modern Rabbies (an opinion, it may be observed, by no means satisfactorily proved) that every emotion of a more vehement kind excluded the Holy Spirit, and consequently was totally inconsistent with prophecy¹⁸; when, on the contrary, we learn from the testimony of the Prophets themselves, that the act of prophesying was often, if not always, accompanied with a very violent agitation of the mind¹⁹. Be this as it may, I am inclined to believe, both from this last and the other instances, that the Prophet himself accompanied the minstrel, and uttered some hymn, or rather the prediction itself, to the music of the harp; and both the style and

¹⁷ וְהָיָה בְּנֶגֶן הַמִּנְגֵּן וְהָיָה עָלָיו יְד וְהָיָה

¹⁸ See MAIMON. *More Neboc*, ii. 36. and many others quoted by SMITH, *Dissert. of Prophecy*, c. viii.

¹⁹ See JER. xxiii. 9. EZEK. iii. 14, 15. DAN. vii. 28. x. 8. HABAK. iii. 2, and 16.

the form of this prophetic reply are very much in favour of this opinion ²⁰.

From all these testimonies it is sufficiently evident, that the prophetic office had a most strict connexion with the poetic art. They had one common name, one common origin, one common author, the Holy Spirit. Those in particular were called to the exercise of the prophetic office, who were previously conversant with the sacred poetry. It was equally a part of their duty to compose verses for the service of the church, and to declare the oracles of God: it cannot, therefore, be doubted that a great portion of the sacred hymns may properly be termed prophecies, or that many of the prophecies are in reality hymns or poems. Since, as we have already proved, it was from the first a principal end and aim of poetry, to impress upon the minds of men the sayings of the wise, and such precepts as related either to the principles of faith, or the laws of morality, as well as to transmit the same to posterity; it ought not

²⁰ Dryden, in the adjustment of his measures, and Handel of his music, to the diversified strains of Timothy, seem both to have possessed the same idea. S. H.

to appear extraordinary, that prophecy, which in this view ranks as a principal, and is of the highest importance, should not disdain the assistance of an art so admirably calculated to effect its purposes. Of this we have an illustrious proof in that prophetic ode of Moses²¹, which he composed by the especial command of God, to be learned by the Israelites, and committed to memory: "That this song may be," says God himself, "for a witness against the people of Israel, when they shall depart from me; this shall be a testimony in their mouths; for it shall not be forgotten, nor shall it depart out of the mouths of their posterity for ever."

But, as on the one hand, this poem of Moses is a clear and remarkable specimen of the prophetic mode of writing; so, on the other, there are many prophecies which are not less conspicuous as poems. It remains, therefore, only to produce a few examples from the prophetic writings. Many of the most ancient of those, which are extant in

²¹ DEUT. xxxii.

²² See DEUT. xxxi. 19, 21.

the Mosaic history, I have already quoted²³, as exhibiting the fairest examples of the Hebrew poetry: for instance, the imprecation of Noah, the blessing of Jacob, and the predictions of Balaam: than all which (and particularly those of Balaam) I do not know that the whole extent of the prophetic writings could afford more pertinent instances. Nay, so eminently distinguished are they by all the characteristics of poetry, that those who are inclined to acknowledge any kind of metre in the Hebrew poetry, must, I am convinced, refer to these as metrical compositions, if they be in the least desirous of maintaining their opinion by fact and argument. Among the prophecies of Balaam I will also venture to class that most elegant poem, which is rescued from oblivion by the prophet Micah²⁴, and which in matter and diction, in the structure, form, and character of the composition, so admirably agrees with the other monuments of his fame, that it evidently appears to be a citation from the

²³ See LECT. IV.

²⁴ Mic. vi. 6—8.

answer of Balaam to the king of the Moabites²⁵:

“Wherewith shall I come before JEHOVAH?”

“Wherewith shall I bow myself unto the High

“God?”

“Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings;

“With calves of a year old?

“Will JEHOVAH be pleased with thousands of

“rams?

“With ten thousands of rivers of oil?

“Shall I give my first-born for my transgression?

“The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

“He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good:

“And what doth JEHOVAH require of thee,

“But to do justice, and to love mercy,

“And to be humble in walking with thy God?”

But if we proceed to other parts of the Sacred History, examples will not be wanting: and among the first of these is that Cygnean song of Moses, as it may properly be called; I do not speak of the prophetic ode, which has frequently been distinguished by that title, but of the last blessing of that divine Prophet, in which are predicted the future fortunes of the Israelites:

²⁵ See Mic. vi. 5. and the late Bishop BUTLER's Sermon on the character of Balaam.

" JEHOVAH came from Sinai:

" And rose up unto them from Seir :"—²⁶

The prophecy is evidently of the same nature with that of Jacob; both in the exordium and the conclusion it is exquisitely sublime; and throughout the whole affords an admirable specimen of the prophetic poetry. In the same class with these may be ranked the answer of Samuel the prophet to Saul, in which he reproaches him with his disobedience and contumacy, and denounces against him the Divine decree of expulsion from his kingdom, it consists of four distichs elegantly corresponding to each other.

" Hath JEHOVAH pleasure in burnt-offerings and
" sacrifices,

" As in listening to the voice of JEHOVAH?

" Behold! to listen is better than sacrifice,

" And to obey than the fat of rams.

" Rebellion is as the sin of divination,

" And contempt as the crime of idolatry.

" Because thou hast rejected the word of JE-

" HOVAH,

" He hath also rejected thee from being king."²⁷

²⁶ DEUT. xxxiii.

²⁷ I SAM. xv. 22, 23. All the old translators seem to have read מוקשיב for לוקשיב, and מוקשיב without prefixed.

The last words of David ²⁸ afford an evident and illustrious instance to the same purpose, however difficult and obscure the verbal interpretation of the prophecy may be. I apprehend the examples from Sacred History will appear sufficiently numerous, if I add the prediction of Isaiah concerning Sennacherib, which is inserted in the book of Kings:

“ He hath despised thee, he hath mocked thee,

“ O virgin daughter of Sion ;

“ He hath shaken his head at thee, O daughter

“ of Jerusalem ²⁹.”

The same passage occurs again among the predictions of the Prophet: and this reminds me that it is now full time to pass from the historians to the books of the prophets themselves, which will afford us abundant instances to demonstrate that the compositions of the prophets are truly poetical, and at the same time to illustrate the nature of their poetry.

²⁸ 2 SAM. xxiii. 1—7.

²⁹ 2 KINGS xix. 21—34. ISA. xxxvii. 22—35.

LECTURE XIX.

THE PROPHETIC POETRY IS SENTENTIOUS.

The psalmody of the Hebrews.—The manner of chanting the hymns by alternate choirs: whence the origin of the poetical construction of the sentences, and that peculiar form, in which verses and distichs run parallel or correspondent to each other.—Three species of parallelism; the synonymous, the antithetic, and the synthetic: examples of each, first from the books generally allowed to be poetical, and afterwards from the writings of the prophets.—The sentiments of R. Azarias considered.—The great importance of an accurate attention to this poetical conformation of the sentences.

THE origin and earliest application of the Hebrew poetry have, I think, been clearly traced into the service of religion. To celebrate in hymns and songs the praises of Almighty God; to decorate the worship of the Most High with all the charms and graces of harmony; to give force and energy to the devout affections was the sublime employment of the Sacred Muse. It is more than probable, that the very early use of sacred music in the public worship of the Hebrews, contributed not a little to the peculiar

peculiar character of their poetry, and might impart to it that appropriate form, which, though chiefly adapted to this particular purpose, it nevertheless preserves on every other occasion. But in order to explain this matter more clearly, it will be necessary to premise a few observations concerning the ancient Hebrew mode of chanting their sacred hymns.

Though we are rather at a loss for information, respecting the usual manner and ceremony of chanting their poems; and though the subject of their sacred music in general be involved in doubt and obscurity, thus far at least is evident from many examples, that the sacred hymns were alternately sung by opposite choirs¹, and that the one choir usually performed the hymn itself, while the other sung a particular distich, which was regularly interposed at stated intervals, either of the nature of the proasm or epode of the Greeks. In this manner we learn that Moses with the Israelites chanted the ode at the Red-sea; for "Miriam the prophetess took a timbrel in her hand,

¹ See NEHEM. xii. 24, 31, 38, 40. and the title of PSAL. lxxxviii.

" and

"and all the women followed her with timbrels, and with dances; and Miriam answered them," that is, she and the women sung the response to the chorus of men²;

"Sing to JEHOVAH, for he is greatly exalted;
 "The horse and the rider he hath cast into the
 "sea."

The same is observable in some of the Psalms, which are composed in this form. The musical performance was on some occasions differently conducted: for instance, one of the choirs sung a single verse to the other, while the other constantly added a verse in some respect correspondent to the former. Of this the following distich is an example,

"Sing praises to JEHOVAH, for he is good;
 "Because his mercy endureth for ever:"

which Ezra³ informs us was sung by the Priests and Levites in alternate choirs at the command of David; as indeed may be collected from the Psalm itself⁴, in which the

² EXOD. xv. 20, 21. See PHILO *ἐπι γαμψίας*, pag. 199. also *ἐπι τῆς δεξιᾶς*, pag. 902. Edit. Paris, 1640.

³ EZR. iii. 11.

⁴ Ps. cxxxvi.

latter verse, sung by the latter choir, forms a perpetual epode. Of the same nature is the song of the women concerning Saul and David; for "the women who played answered one another;" that is, they chanted in two choirs the alternate song⁵, the one choir singing,

Saul

⁵ 1 SAM. xviii. 7.

⁶ It is much to be regretted, that the learned author has not investigated this subject more fully, and with his usual precision.—Though the performance of their Hymns by two, *alternate*, choirs, were the more usual, it evidently was not the only mode: for, as the parallelism of sentences in the Hebrew poetry is not restricted to distichs, but admits a varied form of iteration, so their psalmody, though usually confined to two alternate choruses, was sometimes extended to more. An example of the latter kind will appear in Psalm cxxxv. which was obviously performed by THREE *different* CHOIRS, the High-priest with the House of Aaron constituting the *first*; the Levites serving in the temple, the *second*; and the Congregation of Israel, the *third*; all having their *distinct* parts, and all at stated intervals *uniting* in full chorus.

The High-priest, accompanied by the rest of the priesthood, began with addressing the Levites:

Praise ye Jah!

The Levites return the exhortation to the Priests:

Praise ye the name Jehovah!

The

"Saul hath smote his thousands,"

The

The Priests and Levites then joining, address the Congregation:

Praise him, O ye servants of Jehovah!

The Congregation address the Priests——

Ye that stand in the house of Jehovah!

And the Levites——

In the courts of the house of our God!

This may be considered as the first passus of the *apostrophe*, which the *Choir of Priests* resumes by a second exhortation to the *Levites*, and assigning the reason for their praise:

Praise ye Jah, for Jehovah is good.

The Levites then exhort the Congregation:

Sing praises unto his name, for it is pleasant.

And the Congregation joining both, the three choirs unite in full chorus:

For Jah hath chosen Jacob unto himself:

Israel for his peculiar treasure.

The *apostrophe* thus concluding, the *High-priest*, followed by his band, commences in the 5th verse the Hymn. The 6th verse belongs to the *Levites*, and the 7th to the *Congregation*, both whom having, in them, celebrated Jehovah, as the *Creator* and *Governor* of the world, the *High-priest* descends in the 8th verse to the interpositions of Jehovah in behalf of his chosen people; beginning with the miracle that procured their deliverance from bondage. The *Levites* having adverted to the other miracles wrought in *Ægypt*, in the former clause of the 9th verse, and the *Congregation*, in the latter, pointed out Pharaoh and

The other answering,

“ And David his ten thousands.”

In

and his servants, as those upon whom they, the judgments of Jehovah, were inflicted, the *High-priest*, &c. proceeds in the 10th verse, to remark the extension of similar judgments to other nations and kings, whose names and kingdoms the *Levites* enumerate, in the 11th verse, whilst the *Congregation*, in the 12th, commemorate the blessings which had thence resulted to them. At the close of this recitative, in the first clause of the 13th verse, follows a chorus of the Priests:

Thy name, O Jehovah! endureth for ever!

And in the second, another, of the Levites:

Thy memorial, O Jehovah! throughout all generations.

The Congregation then striking in with Priests and Levites, all unite in full chorus, as before:

For Jehovah will judge his people:

And will repent him concerning his servants.

This chorus may be considered as closing the first part of the Hymn, the concluding clause of which adverting to the frequent backslidings of the Jewish nation, notwithstanding the blessings both *ordinary* and *extraordinary* which Jehovah had conferred upon them, and the prosperity they enjoyed in the land promised to their forefathers, notwithstanding their turning aside to the idolatry of the nations that had been cut off from before them, the choir of *Priests* (referring back to the 5th verse) as if assured that Israel could revolt no more, breaks out in a second

In the very same manner Isaiah describes
the

cond recitative, expressive at once of exultation, and contempt :

The idols of the Heathen, silver and gold, &c.

To this the Levites add in the same indignant strain :

They have mouths, but they speak not, &c.

The Congregation subjoin :

They have ears, but they hear not, &c.

And the three choirs again uniting :

They that make them are like unto them :

Every one that trusteth in them.

With this exquisite contrast between the Gods in whom the Heathen confided, and Jehovah the rock of their salvation—the former unable to aid or hear their votaries, and the latter loading benefits on his own—the second part of the Hymn is concluded, and the High-priest with his choir, by a graceful transition, renews his exhortation as at first ; but now addressing the Congregation :

Bless Jehovah, O house of Israel!

To which the Congregation reply :

Bless Jehovah, O house of Aaron!

The Priests, in like manner, exhorting the Levites :

Bless Jehovah, O house of Levi!

To whom they in their turn rejoin :

Ye that fear Jehovah, bless Jehovah!

All then uniting :

Blessed be Jehovah out of Sion!

Who dwelleth in Jerusalem!

The

the Seraphim chanting the praise of Jehovah⁷: "they cried alternately,

"Holy, holy, holy, JEHOVAH God of Hosts!

"The whole earth is filled with his glory."

From the Jewish, the custom of singing in alternate chorus was transmitted to the Christian Church, and was continued in the latter from the first ages, it was called "alternate or responsive⁸," when the whole choir separated into two divisions sung the Psalm alternately by strophes, and when this was done by single verses, or lines, that is

The whole is closed by each choir in full chorus, exhorting the other two:

Praise ye, Jah!

From this analysis it is evident, that the Hebrew Hymn is a composition not less regular than the Grecian Ode, and of a much more varied nature than the Professor had led his audience to suppose. S. H.

The reader will find the Psalm in an entire state, but divided and apportioned according to the above specimen in the Appendix.

⁷ Is. vi. 3. See what Socrates relates of the origin of the ancient hymns. *Hist. Eccl.* vi. 8.

⁸ PLIN. Lib. x. Epist. 97.—"They repeat alternate verses to Christ, as to a God."

when

when the same division of the choir always sung the latter part of the distich, they were said to sing the choral response⁹.

Now if this were the ancient and primitive mode of chanting their hymns, as indeed appears highly probable, the proximate cause will be easily explained, why poems of this kind are disposed in equal stanzas, indeed in equal distichs, for the most part; and why these distichs should in some measure consist of versicles or parallelisms¹⁰ corresponding to each other. And this mode of composition being admirably adapted to the musical modulation of that kind of poetry, which was most in use among them from the very beginning, and at the same time being perfectly agreeable to the genius

⁹ See BINGHAM's Antiquities of the Christian Church, xiv. 1.

¹⁰ "The correspondence of one verse, or line, with another, I call *parallelism*. When a proposition is delivered, and a second is subjoined to it, or drawn under it, equivalent, or contrasted with it, in sense; or similar to it in the form of grammatical construction; these I call parallel lines; and the words or phrases, answering one to another in the corresponding lines, parallel terms." LOWTH's *Prelim. Disc. to Isaiah*, p. 10.

and cadence of the language, easily extended itself into the other species of poetry, though not designed for the same purpose; in fact, we find that it pervaded the whole of the poetry of the Hebrews; insomuch, that what was said of the Heathen Muses may still more strictly be applied to those of the Hebrews,—“ they love alternate song.” On this occasion also it may not be improper to remark, that the word *ghanah*, which properly signifies to answer, is used more generally to denote any song or poem¹¹; whence we can only infer, either that the word has passed from particular to general use, or that among the Hebrews almost every poem possesses a sort of responsive form.

Such appears to have been the origin and progress of that poetical and artificial conformation of the sentences, which we observe in the poetry of the Hebrews. That it prevailed no less in the Prophetic Poetry than in the Lyric and Didactic, to which it was, in the nature of things, most adapted,

¹¹ EXOD. xxxii. 18. NUM. xxi. 17. HOS. ii. 15. PS. cxlvii. 7. “ Thus the word which in the Arabic answers to *ghanah*, denotes not only to perform alternately, but also to sing.” H.

is evident from those very ancient specimens of poetical prophecy already quoted from the historical books ; and it only remains to shew, that it is no less observable in those which are contained in the volumes of the prophets themselves. In order the more clearly to evince this point, I shall endeavour to illustrate the Hebrew parallelism according to its different species, first by examples taken from those books commonly allowed to be poetical, and afterwards by correspondent examples from the books of the prophets.

The poetical conformation of the sentences, which has been so often alluded to as characteristic of the Hebrew poetry, consists chiefly in a certain equality, resemblance, or parallelism between the members of each period ; so that in two lines (or members of the same period) things for the most part shall answer to things, and words to words, as if fitted to each other by a kind of rule or measure. This parallelism has much variety and many gradations ; it is sometimes more accurate and manifest, sometimes more vague and obscure : it may however, on the whole, be said to consist of three species.

The

The first species is the synonymous parallelism, when the same sentiment is repeated in different, but equivalent terms. This is the most frequent of all, and is often conducted with the utmost accuracy and neatness: examples are very numerous, nor will there be any great difficulty in the choice of them: on this account I shall select such as are most remarkable in other respects.

- " When Israel went out from Egypt ;
- " The house of Jacob from a strange people :
- " Judah was as his sacred heritage :
- " Israel his dominion.
- " The sea saw, and fled ;
- " Jordan turned back :
- " The mountains leaped like rams ;
- " The hills like the sons of the flock.
- " What ailed thee, O Sea, that thou fleddest ;
- " Jordan, that thou turnedst back :
- " Mountains, that ye leaped like rams ;
- " And hills, like the sons of the flock ?
- " At the presence of the Lord tremble thou Earth ;
- " At the presence of the God of Jacob !
- " Who turned the rock into a lake of waters ;
- " The flint into a water spring ¹²."

¹² Ps. cxiv.

The Prophetic Muse is no less elegant and correct :

- “ Arise, be thou enlightened ; for thy light is
 “ come ;
 “ And the glory of JEHOVAH is risen upon thee.
 “ For behold darkness shall cover the earth ;
 “ And a thick vapour the nations :
 “ But upon thee shall JEHOVAH arise ;
 “ And his glory upon thee shall be conspicuous.
 “ And the nations shall walk in thy light ;
 “ And kings in the brightness of thy rising “.”

Observe also that famous prophecy concerning the humiliation, and expiatory sufferings of the Messiah :

- “ Who hath believed our report ;
 “ And to whom hath the arm of JEHOVAH been
 “ manifested :
 “ For he groweth up in their sight like a tender
 “ sucker ;
 “ And like a root from a thirsty soil ;
 “ He hath no form, nor any beauty that we
 “ should regard him ;

“ ISAI. lx. 1—3. “ In the brightness of thy rising,” is an expression uncommonly beautiful and simple ; I never could read it without a glow of tranquil pleasure corresponding to the scene which the image exhibits. T.

“ Nor

“ Nor is his countenance such, that we should
“ desire him.

“ Despised, nor accounted in the number of men ;

“ A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief ;

“ As one that hideth his face from us :

“ He was despised, and we esteemed him not.

“ Surely our infirmities he hath borne .

“ And our sorrows he “ hath carried them. —

“ Yet we thought him judicially stricken ;

“ Smitten of God and afflicted.

“ But he was wounded for our transgressions ;

“ Was smitten for our iniquities :

“ The chastisement by which our peace was ef-
“ fected was laid upon him ;

“ And by his bruises we are healed “.”

Isaiah is indeed excellent, but not unrivalled in this kind of composition : there are abundant examples in the other prophets ; I shall, however, only add one from Hosea, which is exquisitely pathetic.

*4 Some copies, manuscript as well as printed, point out in the margin the word *הוּ* (*he*) to be inserted : (see Bibl. Heb. Edit. MICHAELIS, Var. Lect. in loc.) - The SYR. and VULG. certainly express it, and indeed the repetition of the word gives exquisite force and elegance to the line. “ This word occurs in the text of twelve MSS, “ copies, and in three printed.” K. *Author's Note.*

*5 ISAL. liii. 1—5.

- " How shall I resign thee, O Ephraim !
 " How shall I deliver thee up, O Israel !
 " How shall I resign thee as Admah !
 " How shall I make thee as Zeboim !
 " My heart is changed within me ;
 " I am warmed also with repentance towards
 " thee.
 " I will not do according to the fervour of my
 " wrath,
 " I will not return ¹⁶ to destroy Ephraim :
 " For I am God, and not man ;
 " ¹⁷ Holy in the midst of thee, though I inhabit
 " not thy cities ¹⁷."

There

¹⁶ A beautiful Hebraism to express the repetition of any thing ; in this place it has peculiar force and pathos. T.

¹⁷ There is hardly any thing in which translators have differed more than in the explanation of this line ; which is the more extraordinary when we consider that the words themselves are so well known, and the structure of the period so plain and evident. JEROME is almost singular in his explanation. *Comm. in loc.* " I am not one of those
 " who inhabit cities ; who live according to human
 " laws ; who think cruelty justice." CASTALIO follows JEROME. There is in fact in the latter member of the sentence *לא אבוא בעיר* a parallelism and synonyme to *לא איש* in the former. The future *אבוא* has a frequentative power (see Ps. xxii. 3 and 8.) " I am not accustomed to
 " enter a city ; I am not an inhabitant of a city." For there is a beautiful opposition of the different parts ; " I
 " am

There is great variety in the form of the synonymous parallelism, some instances of which are deserving of remark. The parallelism is sometimes formed by the iteration of the former member, either in the whole or in part :

“ Much have they oppressed me from my youth

“ up,

“ May Israel now say ;

“ Much have they oppressed me from my youth,

“ Yet have they not prevailed against me ¹⁹.”

“ God of vengeance, JEHOVAH ;

“ God of vengeance, shew thyself.

“ How long shall the wicked, O JEHOVAH,

“ How long shall the wicked triumph ²⁰ !”

“ With the jaw-bone of an ass, heaps upon heaps ;

“ With the jaw-bone of an ass a thousand men

“ have I smitten ²¹.”

Thus

“ am God and not man ;” this is amplified in the next line, and the antithesis a little varied. “ I am thy God,

“ inhabiting with thee, but in a peculiar and extraordinary manner, not in the manner of men.” Nothing

I think can be plainer or more elegant than this.

Author's Note.

¹⁸ Hos. xi. 8, 9.

¹⁹ Ps. cxxix. 1, 2.

²⁰ Ps. xciv. 1 and 3.

²¹ JUD. xv. 16. “ It will admit of a doubt whether these words may not be rendered : *With the jaw-bone of*

Thus, Isaiah :

“ Because in the night Ar is destroyed, Moab is
“ undone !

“ Because in the night Kir is destroyed, Moab is
“ undone ²¹.”

So Nahum also in the exordium of his sublime prophecy :

“ JEHOVAH is a jealous and avenging God :

“ JEHOVAH avengeth, and is wrathful :

“ *an afs, in confusing, I have confused them.* For this seems
“ to be the grammatical construction of the words : and
“ the word *Chamar* commonly signifies to trouble or con-
“ fuse. So it is rendered by the LXX, *Εν σιαχόν ος εξαλειφών*
“ *ἐξελείφα αυτες, With the jaw-bone of an afs, in exterminat-*
“ *ing, I have exterminated them,* following the same con-
“ struction, but taking the more violent sense of the
“ word, *destroying, or exterminating* ; which sense it still
“ retains in the Arabic, for in that language it signifies
“ not only to trouble or disturb, but also to overwhelm or
“ suppress. But if in favour of the other interpretation,
“ which is also adopted in our common translation, the
“ passage in Exod. viii. 14. be referred to (*chomarim,*
“ *chomarim, in heaps*) ; it may be said in answer, that the
“ words in these two passages assume a different form.
“ The verb *chamar* in this place seems most directly suited
“ to express tumult and confusion, and is also introduced
“ for the sake of the paronomasia, and the similarity of
“ sound with the preceding word *chamor, an afs.*” H.

²² Chap. xv. 1.

“ JEHOVAH avengeth his adversaries ;
 “ And he reserveth *indignation* for his enemies ²³.”

There is frequently something wanting in the latter member, which must be repeated from the former to complete the sentence :

“ The king sent and released him ;
 “ The ruler of the people, and set him free ²⁴.”

In the same manner Isaiah ;

“ Kings shall see him and shall rise up ;
 “ Princes, and they shall worship him :
 “ For the sake of JEHOVAH, who is faithful ;
 “ Of the Holy One of Israel, for he hath chosen
 “ thee ²⁵.”

Frequently the whole of the latter division answers only to some part of the former :

“ JEHOVAH reigneth, let the earth rejoice ;
 “ Let the multitude of islands be glad ²⁶.”
 “ Arise, be thou enlightened ; for thy light is
 “ come ;
 “ And the glory of JEHOVAH is risen upon thee ²⁷.”

²³ NAH. i. 2.

²⁴ Ps. cv. 20.

²⁵ ISAI. xlix. 7.

²⁶ Ps. xcvi. 1.

²⁷ ISAI. lx. 1.

Sometimes also there are triplet parallelisms. In these the second line is generally synonymous with the first, whilst the third either begins the period, or concludes it, and frequently refers to both the preceding :

“ The floods have lifted up, O JEHOVAH,

“ The floods have lifted up their voice ;

“ The floods have lifted up their waves.

“ Than the voice of many waters,

“ The glorious waves of the sea,

“ JEHOVAH on high is more glorious ²⁸.”

“ Come and let us return unto JEHOVAH ;

“ For he hath torn, and he will heal us ;

“ He hath smitten, and he will bind us up :

“ After two days he will revive us ;

“ On the third day he will raise us up ;

“ And we shall live in his sight ²⁹.”

In stanzas (if I may so call them) of five lines, the nature of which is nearly similar, the line that is not parallel is generally placed between the two distichs :

“ Like as the lion growleth,

“ Even the young lion over his prey ;

“ Though the whole company of shepherds be
“ called together against him :

²⁸ Ps. xciii. 3, 4.

²⁹ Hos. vi. 1, 2.

- " At their voice he will not be terrified,
 " Nor at their tumult will he be humbled ³⁰."
 " Askalon shall see it, and shall fear;
 " Gaza shall also see it, and shall be greatly
 " pained:
 " And Ekron shall be pained, because her ex-
 " pectation is put to shame;
 " And the king shall perish from Gaza;
 " And Askalon shall not be inhabited ³¹."

Those which consist of four lines generally form two regular distichs; but there is sometimes a peculiar artifice to be perceived in the distribution of the sentences:

- " From the Heavens JEHOVAH looketh down,
 " He seeth all the children of men;
 " From the seat of his rest he contemplateth
 " All the inhabitants of the earth ³²."
 " I will drench my arrows in blood,
 " And my sword shall devour flesh;
 " In the blood of the slain and the captives;
 " From the bushy head of the enemies ³³."

In both the above passages, the latter members are to be alternately referred to the for-

³⁰ ISAI. xxxi. 4.

³¹ ZECH. ix. 5.

³² PS. xxxiii. 13, 14.

³³ DEUT. xxxii. 42.

mer. Isaiah too uses with great elegance this form of composition :

- “ For thy husband is thy maker ;
- “ JEHOVAH God of Hosts is his name :
- “ And thy redeemer is the Holy One of Israel ;
- “ The God of the whole earth shall he be
“ called ³⁴.”

The sense has an alternate correspondence in these lines. In the following the form of the construction is alternate :

- * And his land is filled with silver and gold ;
- “ And there is no end to his treasures ;
- “ And his land is filled with horses,
- “ Neither is there any end to his chariots ³⁵.”

The following is perhaps a singular instance :

- “ Who is like unto Jehovah our God ?
- “ Who is exalted to dwell on high,
- “ Who humbleth himself to look down,
- “ In the heavens, and in the earth ³⁶.”

Here the two members of the latter line are to be referred severally to the two preceding lines ; as if it were : “ Who is exalted to

³⁴ ISAI. liv. 5.

³⁵ ISAI. ii. 7.

³⁶ Ps. cxiii. 5, 6.

“ dwell

“ dwell in the heavens, and who humbleth
 “ himself to inspect the things that are in
 “ the earth.”

The Antithetic parallelism is the next that I shall specify, when a thing is illustrated by its contrary being opposed to it. This is not confined to any particular form: for sentiments are opposed to sentiments, words to words, singulars to singulars, plurals to plurals, &c. of which the following are examples:

“ The blows of a friend are faithful;
 “ But the kisses of an enemy are treacherous³⁷.
 “ The cloyed will trample upon an honey-comb;
 “ But to the hungry every bitter thing is sweet.
 “ There is who maketh himself rich, and wanteth
 “ all things;
 “ Who maketh himself poor, yet hath much
 “ wealth.

³⁷ “ To this very day the word עָרַר is in use in the
 “ East, and in an Arabic Lexicon, which is accounted
 “ one of the best, it is explained by the word كَرِب (the
 “ same as the Hebrew כֹּב) to falsify. Whence it is evi-
 “ dent, that there is an antithesis between the two hemi-
 “ stichs, which the LXX have in vain attempted to ex-
 “ plain, they have αὐθιγός, spontaneous or voluntary. They
 “ seem to have read it וְעָרַר.” H.

“ The

“The rich man is wise in his own eyes,
 “But the poor man that hath discernment to trace
 “him out will despise him ³⁸.”

There is sometimes a contraposition of parts in the same sentence, such as occurs once in the above; and as appears in the following:

“I am swarthy but comely, O daughters of Je-
 “rusalem;
 “As the tents of Kedar, as the pavilions of
 “Solomon ³⁹.”

The last line here is also to be divided and separately applied to the preceding, “swarthy
 “as the tents of Kedar; comely as the pa-
 “vilions of Solomon,” so likewise in the
 enigma of Sampson:

“Out of the eater came forth meat;
 “And out of the strong came forth sweetness ⁴⁰.”

This form of composition, indeed, agrees best with adages and acute sayings: it is

³⁸ PROV. xxvii. 6, 7. xiii. 7. xxviii. 11.

³⁹ SONG OF SOLOMON i. 5.

⁴⁰ JUD. xiv. 14. The solution of the enigma by the Philistines is metrical, as well as the answer of Sampson to them. Ib. v. 18. *Author's Note.*

therefore very prevalent in the proverbs of Solomon, in some of which the principal force and elegance depend on the exactness of the antithesis. It is not however inconsistent with the superior kinds of Hebrew poetry; for we meet with it in the thanksgiving ode of Hannah, which is imitated in this particular, as well as in the general form of its composition in that of the Virgin Mary:

“ The bows of the mighty are broken;
 “ And they that stumbled are girded with
 “ strength:

“ The full have hired themselves for bread;
 “ And the hungry have ceased to ⁴¹ hunger:

“ The barren also hath borne seven;
 “ And she who had many children is become
 “ fruitless.

“ JEHOVAH killeth and maketh alive;

“ He casteth down to hell, and lifteth up.

“ JEHOVAH maketh poor, and maketh rich;

“ Depresseth, and also exalteth ⁴².”

⁴¹ “ There is evidently something wanting after (*Chadelu*) *ceased*, in order to complete the sentence. What if we take the word *gnad* from the beginning of the next verse, and so understand it as derived from the verb (*gnieved*) to *spoil* or *rob*? The sense will then be *the hungry ceased from plundering*, that is, on account of their poverty, as in JOB iii. 17.” H.

⁴² 1 SAM. ii. 4—7. compare LUKE i. 52, 53.

The

The sublimer poetry seldom indeed adopts this style. Isaiah, however, by means of it, without departing from his usual dignity, adds greatly to the sweetness of his composition in the following instances :

- “ In a little anger have I forsaken thee ;
- “ But with great mercies will I receive thee again :
- “ In a short wrath I hid my face for a moment from
“ thee ;
- “ But with everlasting kindness will I have mercy
“ on thee ⁴³.”
- “ Behold my servants shall eat, but ye shall be
“ famished ;
- “ Behold my servants shall drink, but ye shall be
“ thirsty ;
- “ Behold my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall
“ be confounded ;
- “ Behold my servants shall sing aloud, for glad-
“ ness of heart ;
- “ But ye shall cry aloud for grief of heart ;
- “ And in the anguish of a broken spirit shall ye
“ howl ⁴⁴.”

There is a third species of parallelism, in which the sentences answer to each other, not by the iteration of the same image or

⁴³ ISAI. liv. 7, 8.

⁴⁴ ISAI. lxxv. 13, 14.

sentiment,

sentiment, or the opposition of their contraries, but merely by the form of construction. To this, which may be called the Synthetic or Constructive Parallelism, may be referred all such as do not come within the two former classes: I shall however produce a few of the most remarkable instances:

“ The law of JEHOVAH is perfect, restoring the
“ soul;

“ The testimony of JEHOVAH is sure, making
“ wise the simple:

“ The precepts of JEHOVAH are right, rejoicing
“ the heart;

“ The commandment of JEHOVAH is clear, en-
“ lightening the eyes:

“ The fear of JEHOVAH is pure, enduring for
“ ever;

“ The judgments of JEHOVAH are truth, they
“ are just altogether.

“ More desirable than gold, or than much fine
“ gold;

“ And sweeter than honey, or the dropping of
“ honey-combs⁴⁵.”

This kind of parallelism generally consists of verses somewhat longer than usual, of which

⁴⁵ Ps. xix. 8—11.

there are not wanting examples in the prophets:

" How hath the oppressor ceased! the exactress
" of gold ceased!

" JEHOVAH hath broken the staff of the wicked,
" the sceptre of the rulers.

" He that smote the people in wrath with a
" stroke unremitted;

" He that ruled the nations in anger is persecuted, and none hindereth.

" The whole earth is at rest, is quiet; they burst
" forth into a joyful shout;

" Even the fir-trees rejoice over thee, the cedars of Lebanon:

" Since thou art fallen, no feller hath come up
" against us.

" Hades from beneath is moved because of thee,
" to meet thee at thy coming:

" He rouseth for thee the mighty dead, all the
" great chiefs of the earth;

" He maketh to rise up from their thrones all the
" kings of the nations ⁴⁵."

Triplets are frequently formed of this kind of parallelism:

" The clouds overflowed with water;

" The atmosphere resounded;

⁴⁵ ISAII. xiv. 4—9.

" Thine

" Thine arrows also issued forth ;
 " The voice of thy thunder was in the skies ;
 " The lightnings enlightened the world ;
 " The earth trembled and shook ⁴⁷."

" I will be as the dew to Israel :
 " He shall blossom as the lily ;
 " And he shall strike his roots like Lebanon,
 " His suckers shall spread,
 " And his glory shall be as the olive-tree,
 " And his smell as Lebanon ⁴⁸."

Frequently one line or member contains two sentiments :

" The nations raged ; the kingdoms were moved ;
 " He uttered a voice ; the earth was dissolved :
 " Be still, and know that I am God :
 " I will be exalted in the nations, I will be exalted
 " in the earth ⁴⁹."

" When thou passest through waters I am with
 " thee ;
 " And through rivers, they shall not overwhelm
 " thee :

" When thou walkest in the fire thou shalt not
 " be scorched ;
 " And the flame shall not cleave to thee ⁵⁰."

There is a peculiar figure which is frequently made use of in this species of parallelism,

⁴⁷ Ps. lxxvii. 18, 19.

⁴⁸ Hos. xiv. 6, 7.

⁴⁹ Ps. xlv. 6 and 10.

⁵⁰ ISA. xliii. 2.

and which seems altogether poetical : that is, when a definite number is put for an indefinite, principally, it should seem, for the sake of the parallelism : for it sometimes happens, that the circumstances afterwards enumerated do not accurately accord with the number specified :

“ In six troubles will he deliver thee ;

“ And in seven there shall no evil touch thee ⁵¹.”

“ God hath said once ;

“ Twice also have I heard the same ⁵².”

That frequently-repeated passage of Amos is well-known :

“ For three transgressions of Damascus,

“ And for four, I will not restore it ⁵³.”

The variety in the form of this synthetic parallelism is very great, and the degrees of resemblance almost infinite : so that sometimes the scheme of the parallelism is very subtle and obscure, and must be developed by art and ability in distinguishing the different members of the sentences, and in dis-

⁵¹ JOB v. 19.

⁵² Ps. lxii. 12.

⁵³ AMOS i. 3, &c.

tributing the points, rather than by depending upon the obvious construction. How much this principle pervades the Hebrew poetry, and how difficult of explication it is, may in some degree be illustrated by one example. This appears to consist of a single line, if the sentiment only be considered :

“ I also have anointed my King on Sion, the
“ mountain of my sanctity ⁵⁴.”

But the general form and nature of the Psalm requires that it should be divided into two parts or versicles ; as if it were,

“ I also have anointed my king ;
“ I have anointed him in Sion, the mountain of
“ my sanctity.”

Which indeed the Masorites seem to have perceived in this as well as in other places ⁵⁵.

In this peculiar conformation, or parallelism of the sentences, I apprehend a considerable part of the Hebrew metre to con-

⁵⁴ Ps. ii. 6.

⁵⁵ For they mark the word מלִּי with the distinctive accent *Attnac*, by which they generally distinguish the members of the distichs. See Ps. xvii. 7. xxxii. 3. xxxiii. 14. cii. 8. cxvi. 1, 9, 12, 14, 15, 18. cxxxvii. 2.

Author's Note.

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list; though it is not improbable that some regard was also paid to the numbers and feet. But of this particular we have at present so little information, that it is utterly impossible to determine, whether it were modulated by the ear alone, or according to any settled or definite rules of prosody. Since however this, and other marks or vestiges, as it were, of the metrical art are alike extant in the writings of the prophets, and in the books which are commonly allowed to be poetical, I think there is sufficient reason to rank them in the same class.

Lest I should seem to have attributed too much to this conformation of the sentences, and to have rashly embraced an opinion not supported by sufficient authority, I shall beg leave to quote to you the opinion of Azarias, a Jew Rabbi, not indeed a very ancient, but a very approved author ⁵⁶. “Without doubt,” says he, “the sacred songs have certain measures and proportions, but these do not consist in the number of the syllables perfect or imperfect, according to the form of the modern verse; but in

⁵⁶ *Mantissa Dissert. ad Librum Cosm.* p. 418.

“ the number of things, and of the parts
 “ of things ; that is, the subject and the
 “ predicate, and their adjuncts, in every
 “ sentence and proposition.” (Which words
 of Azarias are, however, to be understood
 with some limitation ; nor are they to be literally
 interpreted according to their sense in
 logical treatises, for he proceeds,) “ Thus a
 “ phrase, containing two parts of a propo-
 “ sition, consists of two measures : add another
 “ containing four, and they become four
 “ measures : another again containing three
 “ parts of a proposition, consists of three
 “ measures ; add to it another of the like,
 “ and you have six measures : for you are not
 “ to number the words or syllables but the
 “ sentences.” For instance, “ Thy right hand
 “ O JEHOVAH,” according to Azarias, con-
 sists of two terms, or parts of a proposition ;
 to which is connected, “ is all glorious in
 “ power,” consisting likewise of two terms ;
 these joined together make a Tetrameter.
 The following is constructed on a similar
 principle :

“ Thy right-hand, O JEHOVAH, hath crushed
 “ the enemy ”.

” EXOD. xv. 6.

Thus in the following propositions there are three terms or measures,

“ My-doctrine shall-drop, as-the-rain ; my-word
“ shall-distil, as-the-dew ⁵⁸. ”

“ And thus joined together they form an
“ Hexameter.” In fact, what he has here remarked is neither groundless nor altogether just. For with respect to many passages, in which the distribution of the sentences is very unequal, and in which the propositions have but little correspondence with each other, as happens frequently in the Psalms, we must have recourse to some other solution; and when the sentences are most regular and correct, they cannot at all times be reduced to his rules. But although the present question does not depend upon this single point, no man, I think, who reads with attention the poetic books, and especially what may be properly called the prophetic part of them, will entertain a doubt that it is of the utmost importance to distinguish the system of the verses.

⁵⁸ DEUT. xxxii. 2.

But

But should all that has been remarked concerning the members and divisions of the sentences appear light and trifling to some persons, and utterly undeserving any labour or attention; let them remember that nothing can be of greater avail to the proper understanding of any writer, than a previous acquaintance with both his general character, and the peculiarities of his style and manner of writing: let them recollect that translators and commentators have fallen into errors upon no account more frequently, than for want of attention to this article; and indeed, I scarcely know any subject which promises more copiously to reward the labour of such as are studious of sacred criticism, than this one in particular⁵⁹.

⁵⁹ Professor MICHAELIS has subjoined a very considerable addition to this Lecture on the use of the parallelism in the explanation of Scripture, of which he produces several instances.

In Ps. xxii. 3. our English translation runs thus: "They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that *he hath done this*:" and in the Common Prayer, "unto a people that shall be born, *whom the Lord hath made*." The Professor justly observes, that the word which is here rendered *righteousness*, may, with equal propriety, be translated *truth*, and then,

then, by the assistance of the parallelism, the just sense is restored, and the passage will run thus :

“ They shall come, and shall declare his truth ;
 “ To a people that shall be born (*they shall declare*) that
 “ he hath performed it.”

That is, that he hath fulfilled his promises, and divine predictions.

Ps. xxv. 13. The literal translation is,

“ His soul shall rest in good,
 “ And his seed shall inherit the land.”

It is not easy to say in what sense we are to take the former part of the sentence. It may either be *to sleep secure from danger* ; or, *to enjoy ease and plenty*, i. e. *to remain in a prosperous state* ; or lastly it may indicate *the state after death, or a happiness beyond the grave*. This last meaning the Professor prefers on account of the parallelism, since the corresponding member of the sentence, *his seed shall inherit the land*, is undoubtedly among those blessings which the Deity promises to the righteous after death.

Ps. cxxx. 20. According to our translation :

“ For they speak against thee wickedly,
 “ And thine enemies take *thy name* in vain.”

The Professor thinks that *nasa lisbave* may be translated to *profess falsely* or to *perjure themselves*. The sense of the second line will therefore run thus : *Who swear falsely by thy cities*, i. e. by Sichem, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, &c. by which it was customary for the Jews to swear, as is plain from MATT. v. 35. and this interpretation not only is such as would be suggested by a proper attention to the parallelism,

parallelism, but is perfectly correspondent to the context :

“ I would that thou wouldest slay the wicked, O God ;
“ And that the men of blood should depart from me !
“ Who use thy name only for deceit,
“ And swear falsely by thy cities.
“ Do not I hate them, who hate thee,” &c.

Ps. cxxxvii. 9.

“ Who giveth to the beast his food,
“ And to the young ravens which cry.”

More agreeable to the Hebrew idiom thus,

“ Who giveth to the beast his food,
“ And to the young ravens that for which they cry.”

But the most complete examples of the use of the parallelism will be found in our Author's Preliminary Dissertation to his Isaiah. T.

LECTURE XX.

THE GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROPHETIC POETRY.

The whole of the book of Daniel, as well as of Jonah, are to be excepted as not poetical, though of the prophetic kind; also certain historical relations inserted in the books of the Prophets.—Some poems occur in the prophetic writings, which properly belong to the other classes of poetry.—The remainder constitutes what may be termed a system or code of prophetic poetry.—The character of this species of Poetry deduced from the nature and design of Prophecy itself.—An example of the true style of prophetic poetry produced from Isaiah, and explained: also another from the prophecies of Balaam, translated into English verse.

IN the two last Lectures I endeavoured to explain upon what reasons I was induced to class the predictions of the prophets among the poetical productions of the Hebrews. I speak not of all, but the greater part of the prophetic writings: for there are among them parts which are not prophetic, and even among those which are, there are some passages not poetical. I except, in the first place, those narrations plainly historical, relating to the facts which gave occasion to the prophecies,

phesies, and which serve to introduce, to explain, and illustrate them: some of this kind occur in Isaiah, and in Jeremiah many more. The whole of what is called the prophecy of Jonah is the bare recital of a fact, and contains nothing of poetry but the prayer of the prophet, which is an ode. Some of the prophecies themselves must also be excepted, which are indeed sublime and important as to the matter, but not at all poetical as to the style and metrical structure: of this kind many passages occur in Ezekiel; who frequently appears more of the orator than the poet. The whole book of Daniel too, being no more than a plain relation of facts partly past and partly future, must be excluded the class of poetical prophecy. Much I confess of the parabolic imagery is introduced in that book, but the author introduces it as a prophet only; as. visionary and allegorical symbols of objects and events, totally untinged with the true poetical colouring. The Jews, indeed, would refuse to Daniel even the character of a prophet, but the arguments under which they shelter this opinion are very futile: for those points which they maintain, concerning the conditions

tions, on which the gift of prophecy is imparted; the different gradations, and the discrimination between the true prophecy and mere inspiration; are all trifling and absurd, without any foundation in the nature of things, and totally destitute of scriptural authority. They add, that Daniel was neither

¹ See MAIMON, *More Neboc.* ii. 45. Our Author in this place alludes to the Rabbinical notions concerning inspiration, which are explained more at large by BASNAGE. "They distinguish," says that author, "eleven degrees of Prophecy. They reckon among inspired men those who felt some inward emotions, urging them to perform extraordinary actions, as Samson. Those, who composed Hymns and Psalms, because they believed themselves inspired with God's Spirit, were accounted so many prophets. However these prophets are distinguished from the following orders: 1. When Zechariah says, *the word of the Lord came unto me.* 2. Samuel heard a voice, but did not see, who spoke. 3. When a man speaks in a dream with a prophet, as it happened to Ezekiel, to whom a man cried, *Son of man.* 4. Angels spoke often in dreams. 5. It was sometimes thought, that God himself spoke in a dream. 6. Some mystical objects were discovered. 7. An audible voice was heard from the midst of these objects. 8. A man is seen speaking, as it happened to Abraham under the oak of Mamre, which however was a vision. 9. Lastly, an angel is perceived speaking. Thus Abraham heard one, when he was binding Isaac upon the altar to sacrifice him: but that was also a vision." *Hist. of the Jews*, B. IV. ch. xviii. §. II. T.

originally

originally educated in the prophetic discipline and precepts, nor afterwards lived conformably to the manner of the prophets. I do not, however, comprehend how this can diminish his claim to a divine mission and inspiration; it may possibly enable us, indeed, to assign a reason for the dissimilarity between the style of Daniel and that of the other Prophets, and for its possessing so little of the diction and character of poetry, which the rest seem to have imbibed in common from the schools and discipline in which they were educated².

There

² We may add the decline of the Hebrew language, which in the Babylonish captivity lost all its grace and elegance. Nor among so many evils which beset their nation, is it surprising that they should have neither leisure nor spirit for the cultivation of the fine arts? Besides, when a language is confined chiefly to the lowest of the people, it is hardly to be expected that it should produce any poets worthy of the name. Let any man compare what was written in Hebrew before and after the Babylonish exile, and I apprehend he will perceive no less evident marks of decay and ruin than in the Latin language. Wherefore it appears to me very improbable, that any Psalms, which breathe a truly sublime and poetical spirit, were composed after the return from Babylon, excepting perhaps that elegant piece of poetry the cxxxviii. Certainly

There occur, moreover, in the writings of the Prophets, certain passages, which although poetical, yet do not properly belong to this species of poetry. I allude to some instances in Isaiah, Habbakuk, and Ezekiel, which appear to constitute complete poems of different kinds, Odes as well as Elegies. These also being excepted, all the other predictions of the prophets (including such as are extant in the historical books, most of which have been occasionally quoted in the course of these Lectures, form a whole, and constitute that particular species of poetry, which I distinguish by the appellation of prophetic. I shall now endeavour, in the first place, to offer to your consideration such a description of this species of poetry, as may serve to distinguish it from the rest; and afterwards to delineate the peculiar character

certainly nothing can be more absurd than the error, into which some commentators have fallen, in attributing some of the sublimest of the Psalms to Ezra, than whose style nothing can be meaner or more ungraceful. Indeed I have myself some doubts concerning the cxxxix. which I am more inclined to attribute to Jeremiah, or some contemporary of his; and I think the taste and spirit of the bard, who sung so sweetly elsewhere the miseries of his nation, may very plainly be discerned in it. M.

of

of each of the prophets, as far as may be consistent with the object of these Lectures.

The genius of the prophetic poetry is to be explored by a due attention to the nature and design of prophecy itself. The immediate design of all prophecy is to inform or amend those generations that precede the events predicted, and it is usually calculated either to excite their fears and apprehensions, or to afford them consolation. The means which it employs for the accomplishment of these effects, are a general amplification of the subject, whether it be of the menacing or consolatory kind, copious descriptions, diversified, pompous and sublime; in this also it necessarily avoids too great a degree of exactness, and too formal a display of the minuter circumstances; rather employing a vague and general style of description, expressive only of the nature and magnitude of the subject: for prophecy in its very nature implies some degree of obscurity, and is always, as the Apostle elegantly expresses it, "like a light glimmering in a dark place, "until the day dawn, and the day-star "arise". But there is also a further use

³ 2 PET. ii. 9.

and intention of prophecy, which regards those who live after the prediction is accomplished, and that is, the demonstration and attestation which it affords of the divine veracity : this evidently appears to demand a different form of enunciation ; for correct language, apt imagery, and an exact display of circumstances, are peculiarly adapted to this purpose. Since, however, a very plain description would totally withdraw the veil of obscurity, a more sparing use of this liberty of particularizing is frequently adequate to that purpose ; for the particular notification of one or two circumstances, united with a general propriety in the imagery, the proper adaptation of which shall appear after the event, will afford an accumulation of evidence that cannot be withstood, as might be demonstrated in a number of instances *. The prophetic style, therefore, is chiefly constructed on the former principle ; that is, it commonly prefers a general mode of amplifying and elevating the subject, rarely and cautiously descending to a circumstantial detail.

* See LECT. IX. conclusion.

There

There is also another particular, which must not be omitted. Prophecy frequently takes in, at a single glance, a variety of events, distinct both in nature and time, and pursues the extreme and principal design through all its different gradations. From this cause also it principally employs general ideas, and expresses them by imagery of established use and acceptation, for these are equally capable of comprehending the general scope of the divine counsels, and of accompanying the particular progressions of circumstances, situations, and events; they may be easily applied to the intermediate relations and ends, but must be more accurately weighed and proportioned to equal the magnitude and importance of the ultimate design.

If such be the genius of prophecy; if it be chiefly employed in describing only the exterior lineaments of events, and in depicting and embellishing general effects; it will not be difficult to understand with how much advantage it may make use of the assistance and ministration of poetry, and in particular of the parabolic style; the nature of which, as I have already copiously stated, is to afford

an abundance and variety of imagery of established use and acceptation, from which every subject may receive the most ample and the most proper embellishments. Hence too we may easily collect the peculiar character of the prophetic poetry.

This species of poetry is more ornamented, more splendid, and more florid than any other. It abounds more in imagery, at least in that species of imagery which, in the parabolic style, is of common and established acceptation, and which, by means of a settled analogy always preserved, is transferred from certain and definite objects to express indefinite and general ideas. Of all the images proper to the parabolic style, it most frequently introduces those which are taken from natural objects and from sacred history: it abounds most in metaphors, allegories, comparisons, and even in copious and diffuse descriptions. It possesses all that genuine enthusiasm, which is the natural attendant on inspiration; it excels in the brightness of imagination and in clearness and energy of diction, and consequently rises to an uncommon pitch of sublimity: hence also it often is very happy in the expression
and

and delineation of the passions, though more commonly employed in the exciting of them; this indeed is its immediate object, over this it presides as its peculiar province.

In respect to the order, disposition, and symmetry of a perfect poem of the prophetic kind, I do not know of any certain definition, which will admit of general application. Naturally free, and of too ardent a spirit to be confined by rule, it is usually guided by the nature of the subject only, and the impulse of divine inspiration. There are not wanting, it is true, instances of great elegance and perfection in these particulars. Among the shorter prophecies, I need only mention those of Balaam, each of which is possessed of a certain accuracy of arrangement and symmetry of form; they open with an elegant exordium, they proceed with a methodical continuation of the subject, and are wound up with a full and graceful conclusion. There are many similar instances in the books of the Prophets, and particularly in Isaiah, which deserve the highest commendation, and may with propriety be classed with the most perfect and regular specimens of poetry. I shall select

for your consideration one example from that most accomplished writer, which is embellished with all the most striking ornaments of poetry: from this instance I shall not only demonstrate with what accuracy the prophetic Muse sometimes preserves the proper order and arrangement of the parts and circumstances; but I shall be enabled, at the same time, to illustrate most of those positions, which I have now laid down, concerning the nature and genius of the prophetic poetry. Such an illustration will probably be not unnecessary; since it is to be apprehended, that what has been remarked only in general terms upon so subtle and difficult a subject, may, without the aid of example, appear not a little perplexed and obscure.

The thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth chapters of Isaiah contain a remarkable prophecy. It is a simple, regular, and perfect poem, consisting of two parts according to the nature of the subject, which, as to its general properties, is explained with the utmost perspicuity. The first part of the prophecy contains a denunciation of extraordinary punishment, indeed nothing short of total destruction

tion against the enemies of the church of God; and afterwards, in consequence of this event, a full and complete restoration is promised to the church itself. The Prophet introduces the subject by a magnificent exordium, invoking universal nature to the observation of these events, in which the whole world should seem to be interested :

“ Draw near, O ye nations, and hearken;
“ And attend unto me, O ye people !
“ Let the earth hear, and the fulness thereof;
“ The world, and all that spring from it.”

He then publishes the decree of JEHOVAH concerning the extirpation of all those nations against whom “ his wrath is kindled :” and he amplifies this act of vengeance and destruction by an admirable selection of splendid imagery, all of which is of the same kind with that which is made use of by the prophets upon similar occasions ; the nature of which is to exaggerate the force, the magnitude, atrocity and importance of the impending visitation ; whilst nothing determinate is specified concerning the manner, the

^s Chap. xxxiv. 1..

time, the place, or other minute circumstances. He first exhibits that truly martial picture of slaughter and destruction after a victory :

“ And their slain shall be cast out ;

“ And from their carcases their stench shall
“ ascend ;

“ And the mountains shall melt down with their
“ blood *.”

He then takes a bolder flight, and illustrates his description by imagery borrowed from the Mosaic chaos (which is a common source of figurative language on these occasions, and is appropriated to the expression of the downfall of nations) ; and, as if he were displaying the total subversion of the universe itself :

“ And all the host of heaven shall waste away ;

“ And the heavens shall be rolled up like a
“ scroll :

“ And all their host shall wither ;

“ As the withered leaf droppeth from the vine,

“ And as the blighted fruit from the fig-tree ?.”

* Ver. 3.

? Ver. 4.

A different image is immediately introduced; a solemn sacrifice is celebrated, and an uncommon number of victims are displayed; JEHOVAH himself takes a part in this magnificent scene, and every circumstance is brought directly before our eyes;

- “ For my sword is made bare in the heavens;
 “ Behold, on Edom it shall descend;
 “ And on the people justly by me devoted to
 “ destruction.”
 “ The sword of JEHOVAH is satiated with blood;
 “ It is pampered with fat:
 “ With the blood of lambs, and of goats;
 “ With the fat of the reins of rams;
 “ For JEHOVAH celebrateth a sacrifice in Botzra,
 “ And a great slaughter in the land of Edom^a.”

The goats, the rams, the bulls, the flocks, and other animals, which are mentioned in

^a Ver. 5, 6. In this prophecy Edom is particularly marked out as an object of the Divine vengeance. The principal provocation of Edom was their insulting the Jews in their distress, and joining against them with their enemies the Chaldeans: See AMOS i. 11. EZEK. xxv. 12. xxxv. 15. Ps. cxxxvii. 7. Accordingly the Edomites were, together with the rest of the neighbouring nations, ravaged and laid waste by Nebuchadnezzar: See JER. xxv. 15—26. MAL. i. 2, 3, 4. and see MARSHAM *Can. Chron. Sæc. xviii.* who calls this the age of the destruction of cities. Bp. LOWTH's *Isaiah* 171. T. this

this passage and those which follow, are commonly used by the prophets to denote the haughty, ferocious, and insolent tyrants and chiefs of those nations, which were inimical to God. On the same principle we may explain the allusion to Botzra and Idumea, a city and nation in the highest degree obnoxious to the people of God. These, however, the prophecy seems only slightly or cursorily to glance at: the phraseology is indeed of that kind which expresses generals by particulars; or consists, as I formerly remarked, of a figure taken from a determinate and definite object, and by analogy applied in a more extensive sense; in which respect the very words which are made use of have in this place a peculiar form and propriety^o. But the same circumstance is again described by a succession of new and splendid images borrowed from the overthrow of Sodom, which, as was formerly demonstrated, may be termed one of the common-places of the inspired Poets:

^o See LOWTH and VITRINGA on the place, and on chap. lxiii. 1.

“ For

" For it is the day of vengeance to JEHOVAH;
 " The year of recompense to the defender of the
 " cause of Sion.
 " And her torrents shall be turned into pitch,
 " And her dust into sulphur;
 " And her whole land shall become burning
 " pitch:
 " By night or by day it shall not be extinguished;
 " For ever shall her smoke ascend:
 " From generation to generation she shall lie
 " desert;
 " To everlasting ages no one shall pass through
 " her¹⁰."

Lastly, the same event is prefigured under the image of a vast and solitary desert, to which, according to the divine decree, that region is devoted¹¹. This description the prophet afterwards improves, diversifies, and enlarges, by the addition of several important circumstances, all which, however, have a certain analogy or connexion with each other.

¹⁰ Ver. 8, 9, 10.

¹¹ Ver. 11, &c.—Ver. 16. "For ^פי יחזק three MSS.
 " have ^פי יחזק: two others have it in a corrected hand.
 " The LXX also read יחזק." K. Two MSS. *Erfurt*,
 read ^פי יחזק. See Bib. Heb. MICHAELIS on the place.

The other part of the poem is constructed upon similar principles, and exhibits a beautiful contrast to the preceding scene. The imagery possesses every possible advantage of ornament and variety; it is like the former, altogether of a general kind, and of extensive application; but the meaning is plain and perspicuous. Many of the preceding images are taken from the Sacred History; the following are almost entirely from the objects of nature:

- " The desert and the waste, shall be glad;
- " And the wilderness shall rejoice and flourish:
- " Like the rose shall it beautifully flourish;
- " And the well-watered plain of Jordan shall
 " also rejoice:
- " And the glory of Lebanon shall be given
 " unto it,
- " The beauty of Carmel and of Sharon;
- " These shall behold the glory of JEHOVAH,
- " The Majesty of our God ¹²."

I formerly remarked the extensive application of Lebanon and Carmel in a figurative sense ¹³, and that they are sometimes expressive even of the divine glory and Ma-

¹² Chap. xxxv. 1, 2.

¹³ See LECT. VI.

jefty ¹⁴. The cultivation and watering of a barren and rocky soil is so frequently, I might say invariably, in the parabolic style employed to denote the divine grace and spiritual endowments, that there is no necessity for any further explanation of this symbol; nor is the succeeding imagery, which, according to a similar analogy, seems to illustrate the same event, less clear and perspicuous.

To him who attentively reads and considers the whole poem, the order and arrangement of the subject will be more fully apparent. The passages which I have noted will, however, I apprehend, be sufficient to demonstrate the species of imagery, the style, and colours most congenial to the prophetic Muse; they will also, I flatter myself, be sufficient in some measure to explain the manner in which she contrives to display, in the strongest colours, the general nature, magnitude, and importance of events; and at the same time to leave the particular situations, the intermediate gradations, and all the minuter circumstances concealed under

¹⁴ See LECT. VIII.

the bold and prominent features of the description, till the accomplishment of the prediction. There are indeed one or two passages in this prophecy which would serve to illustrate this position¹⁵; in the rest, the circum-

¹⁵ See chap. xxxv. 4, 5, 6, 8. Which, without a doubt, in their proximate sense relate to the first coming of the Messiah; to the miracles which were performed by him; to the preaching of the Gospel; and the effusion of the Holy Spirit. In the 8th, the absurd interpunctuation, rendered sacred by the authority of the Masorites, creates a degree of almost impenetrable obscurity. It is, however, a true pentacolon, and ought to be distributed in this manner:

- “ And an highway shall be there;
- “ And it shall be called the way of holiness:
- “ No unclean person shall pass through it:
- “ But he himself shall be with them, walking in the way,
- “ And the foolish shall not err therein.”

HE, that is, our God, spoken of before in the 4th verse;
 ος εσσηνωση εν ημιν, και εισηλθε και εξαλθεν εν ημας. Thus the
 CHAL. the SYR. the VULG. and some of the more modern translators have distinguished them. VITRINGA, who is by far the most learned of the commentators, but too much a slave to the authority of the Masorites, has in vain attempted a refutation of them.

HOUBIGANT remarks, that the LXX in the 2d verse, for ורנן read ורנן, concerning which reading, conceiving it to be of considerable importance, I consulted Dr. Ken-

nicott.

circumstances and progress of the particular events are not yet unfolded; for this prophecy

nicott. Though the manuscript copies, however, afforded no assistance towards the restoration of this word, he very kindly communicated some critical remarks upon the whole chapter, which I shall endeavour to explain with as much brevity as possible.

Ver. 1. "*Jesufom* (they will rejoice.) The old versions do not allow of the suffix. Perhaps the ן (m) may have been added from the beginning of the next word. It was customary in the Hebrew manuscripts, in order to fill up one line to take the initial letter or letters of the word that began the next, which, however, they failed not to copy in its proper place."

Ver. 2. It is well observed by Houbigant, that the Seventy read this differently, for instead of *Gilat-ve-ranen* (with joy and singing) they certainly read other words, which they rendered *ve ipnua ve Iordann* (the desert places of Jordan) in the same manner also the Arabic; and this reading seems most perfectly to agree with the design of the prophet. He thinks it ought to be read *Galat Jordan* (the marshes of Jordan): I would myself prefer *Gidab Jordan* (the bank of Jordan.) In the present reading there is neither meaning nor construction, for an antecedent is wanting, to the word ןל (to it.) "The word *Gedot* occurs in four places, and thrice is joined to *Jordan*, (as in this): and though the singular *Gidab* does not elsewhere occur, it is found in the Chaldee *Gida* (a bank.)"

"Six MSS. for ןל read ןל. If this be admitted, the version will be,

"And

phesy is evidently one of those which are not yet completely fulfilled, and of which the greater part at least is yet deposited in the secret counsels of the Most High.

That

"And thou also shalt exult, O bank of Jordan;
"The glory of Lebanon shall be given unto thee."

"But perhaps the true reading may be *ve-ithagali et* (and thou shalt exult, O bank): for the final *Pe* is often so written, that it can scarcely be distinguished from the *Tau*: as is the case with this same word in two MSS."
Ver. 7. "*Rabetzah* (a couching-place) should, it appears, be in the plural to agree with *thanim* (dragons): our most ancient MS. has *mem* for *be*; and another has *rabitzah*, retaining the *jod*, though in a different place. The meaning, however, of this verse is;

"In the place, which was inhabited by dragons,
"Shall grass spring up instead of reeds and rushes."

Ver. 8. "Not only the *Syr.* but also fourteen MSS. omit the second *ve-derach*. Houbigant thinks, that for *לך* we ought to read *לך*; and rightly, for the suffix in the following verse, which relates to the same is masculine, *יְעִלְכֶנּוּ*."

Ver. 9. "After *ve-balechu* (shall walk) the word *shom* (*there*) seems wanting: it is added by the LXX and the AR." K.

VITRINGA approves of the opinion of the Chaldee paraphrast, who in ver. 8, thus translates: "and those who pass that way shall not faint." He however has not embraced

That I may not however conclude this lecture without exhibiting the form of some prophetic poem complete in all parts, I have selected for this purpose one of the prophecies of Balaam, which I so lately mentioned, and which in the course of these lectures have more than once deservedly attracted our attention: for indeed I do not know that the whole scope of the Hebrew poetry contains any thing more exquisite or perfect. This, which is at present under our consideration, abounds in gay and splendid imagery copied immediately from the tablet of Nature; and is chiefly conspicuous for the glowing elegance of the style, and the form and diversity of the figures. Though every attempt to display the beauties of the Hebrew imagery in the poetry of another language must fall greatly short of the design, it will yet give a little variety to our studies, to inter-

embraced the reading, for it is plain he did not perceive in what manner it had been formed from the Hebrew text. The CHALDEAN paraphrast doubtless, instead of *והוא למן* read *והוא חמל*. This remark was furnished me, with many others, by a distinguished character, whose great erudition reflects honour upon a very exalted situation.

Author's Note.

perfe them occasionally with modern verfe.
On thefe occasions, as indeed on every other,
I muft rely upon the candour of this au-
dience to accept in good part the willing tri-
bute of my faint endeavours ¹⁶.

In proud array thy tents expand,
O Ifrael, o'er the fubject land:
As the broad vales in profpect rife,
As gardens by the waters fpread,
As cedars of majestic fize,
That fhade the f acred fountain's head.

Thy torrents fhall the earth o'erflow,
O'erwhelming each obdurate foe.
In vain the mind effays to trace
The glories of thy countlefs race,
In vain thy king's imperial ftate
Shall haughty Agag emulate.

His mighty God's protecting hand
Led him from Pharoah's tyrant land.
Strong as the beaft that rules the plain,
What power his fury fhall refrain?
Who dares refift, his force fhall feel.
The nations fee, and trembling fly,
Or in th' unequal conflict die;
And glut with blood his thirfty fteel.

¹⁶ See NUM. xxiv. 5—9.

With aspect keen he mark'd his prey,—
He couch'd—In secret ambush lay.—
Who shall the furious lion dare?
Who shall unmov'd his terrors see?
—Blest, who for thee exalts his prayer!
And curst the wretch, who curseth thee!

LECTURE XXI.

THE PECULIAR CHARACTER OF EACH OF THE PROPHETS.

The particular style and character of the different Prophets : what parts of each of them are poetical, and what otherwise.—Nothing deserving of notice of this kind in the poetry of Greece.—In the Latin poetry the fourth Eclogue of Virgil is remarkable ; that poem much more obscure than it is generally accounted, and has not hitherto been properly explained.

“**T**HE Prophets have each their peculiar character,” says Jerome, speaking of the twelve minor prophets¹. The same however might more properly be affirmed with respect to the three greater : for Isaiah is extremely different from Jeremiah ; nor is it easy to conceive any composition of the same denomination more dissimilar to both of them than the book of Ezekiel.

Isaiah, the first of the prophets, both in order and dignity, abounds in such transcendent excellencies, that he may be properly said to afford the most perfect model of the

¹ Pref. in XII Proph.

prophetic poetry. He is at once elegant and sublime, forcible and ornamented; he unites energy with copiousness, and dignity with variety. In his sentiments there is uncommon elevation and majesty; in his imagery the utmost propriety, elegance, dignity, and diversity; in his language uncommon beauty and energy; and, notwithstanding the obscurity of his subjects, a surprising degree of clearness and simplicity. To these we may add, there is such sweetness in the poetical composition of his sentences, whether it proceed from art or genius, that if the Hebrew poetry at present is possessed of any remains of its native grace and harmony, we shall chiefly find them in the writings of Isaiah: so that the saying of Ezekiel may most justly be applied to this prophet:

“Thou art the confirmed exemplar of measures,

“Full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty².”

Isaiah greatly excels too in all the graces of method, order, connexion, and arrangement: though in asserting this we must not forget the nature of the prophetic impulse, which

² EZEK. xxviii. 12.

bears away the mind with irresistible violence, and frequently in rapid transitions from near to remote objects, from human to divine: we must also be careful in remarking the limits of particular predictions, since, as they are now extant, they are often improperly connected, without any marks of discrimination, which injudicious arrangement, on some occasions, creates almost insuperable difficulties. I lately produced a specimen from this prophet of a complete poem disposed in the most perspicuous order; and in the former part of his volume many instances may be found, where the particular predictions are distinctly marked. The latter part, which I suppose to commence at the fortieth chapter, is perhaps the most elegant specimen remaining of inspired composition, and yet in this respect is attended with considerable difficulty. It is, in fact, a body or collection of different prophecies, nearly allied to each other as to the subject, which, for that reason, having a sort of connexion, are not to be separated but with the utmost difficulty. The general subject is the restoration of the church. Its deliverance from captivity; the destruction of idolatry; the vindi-

vindication of the divine power and truth; the consolation of the Israelites, the divine invitation which is extended to them, their incredulity, impiety, and rejection; the calling in of the Gentiles; the restoration of the chosen people; the glory and felicity of the church in its perfect state; and the ultimate destruction of the wicked; are all set forth with a sufficient respect to order and method. If we read these passages with attention, and duly regard the nature and genius of the mystical allegory, as explained in the eleventh Lecture; at the same time remembering, that all these points have been frequently touched upon in other prophecies promulg'd at different times, we shall neither find any irregularity in the arrangement of the whole, nor any want of order and connexion as to matter or sentiment in the different parts. I must add, that I esteem the whole book of Isaiah to be poetical, a few passages excepted, which, if brought together, would not at most exceed the bulk of five or six chapters.

Jeremiah, though deficient neither in elegance nor sublimity, must give place in

both to Isaiah. Jerome³ seems to object against him a sort of rusticity of language, no vestige of which, I must however confess, I have been able to discover. His sentiments, it is true, are not always the most elevated, nor are his periods always neat and compact; but these are faults common to those writers, whose principal aim is to excite the gentler affections, and to call forth the tear of sympathy or sorrow. This observation is very strongly exemplified in the Lamenta-

³ *Præf. in Jer.* He probably adopted this opinion from his masters, the Jews. Of the more modern Rabbies, ABRABANEL (*præf. in Jer.*) complains grievously of the grammatical ignorance of the prophet, and his frequent solecisms; which he says Ezra corrected by the Keri or marginal notes, for he remarks that they occur more frequently in him than elsewhere. Absurd and ridiculous! to attribute the errors of transcribers, which occur in almost every part of the Hebrew text, to the sacred writers themselves, the greater part of these errors he would indeed have found scarcely to exist, if he had consulted the more correct copies, which remain even at this day: for among these very marginal readings, there are but few, which, in the more ancient MSS. are not found in the text. WALTON has long since given a remarkable example of this kind (*Prolegom.* iv. 12.) The collations of Dr. KENNICOTT will afford many more.

Author's Note.

tions,

tions, where these are the prevailing passions; it is however frequently instanced in the prophecies of this author, and most of all in the beginning of the book ⁴, which is chiefly poetical. The middle of it is almost entirely historical. The latter part, again, consisting of the six last chapters, is altogether poetical ⁵; it contains several different predictions, which are distinctly marked, and in these the prophet approaches very near the sublimity of Isaiah. On the whole, however, I can scarcely pronounce above half the book of Jeremiah to be poetical.

Ezekiel is much inferior to Jeremiah in elegance; in sublimity he is not even excelled by Isaiah: but his sublimity is of a totally different kind ⁶. He is deep, vehement, tragical;

⁴ See the whole of chap. ix. chap. xiv. 17, &c. xx. 14—18.

⁵ Chap. xlvi—li. to ver. 59. chap. lii. properly belongs to the Lamentations, to which it serves as an exordium.

⁶ I must confess that I feel not perfectly satisfied with myself, when in a matter entirely dependant upon taste, I can by no means bring myself to agree with our author. So far from esteeming Ezekiel equal to Isaiah in sublimity,
I am

tragical; the only sensation he affects to excite is the terrible: his sentiments are elevated,

I am inclined rather to think, that he displays more art and luxuriance in amplifying and decorating his subject than is consistent with the poetical fervour, or indeed with true sublimity. He is in general an imitator, and yet he has the art of giving an air of novelty and ingenuity, but not of grandeur and sublimity, to all his composition. The imagery which is familiar to the Hebrew poetry he constantly makes use of, and those figures which were invented by others, but were only glanced at, or partially displayed by those who first used them, he dwells upon, and depicts with such accuracy and copiousness, that he leaves nothing to add to them, nothing to be supplied by the reader's imagination. On this score his ingenuity is to be commended, and he is therefore of use to his readers, because he enables them better to understand the ancient poets; but he certainly does not strike with admiration, or display any trait of sublimity.

Of this I will propose only one example: many of the same kind may be found in looking over the writings of this prophet. In describing a great slaughter, it is very common in the best poets to introduce a slight allusion to birds of prey. Thus in the *ILIAD*:

Αἶψα δ' ἐλπίε τεύχεα κυνέσσειν

Οἰωνοὶ τε πῶσι

“ Whose limbs, unbury'd on the naked shore,

“ Devouring dogs and hungry vultures tore.” *Pope*.

Thus, it is the language of boasting in the historical part of Scripture—“ I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of
“ the

vated, fervid, full of fire, indignant; his imagery is crowded, magnificent, terrific, some-

- " the air, and unto the beasts of the field." 1 SAM. xvii. 44. Asaph also in Ps. lxxviii. 48. " He gave their cattle to the hail, and their flocks to the birds." Moses is still more sublime, DEUT. xxxii. 23, 24.
- " I will spend mine arrows upon them.
 " They shall be eaten up with hunger, a prey unto birds,
 " And to bitter destruction!
 " I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them,
 " With the poison of the reptiles of the earth."

But HABAKKUK is more excellent than either of the former, chap. iii. 5. speaking of the victory of JEHOVAH over his enemies:

- " Before him went the pestilence,
 " And his footsteps were traced by the birds."

Doubtless, the *birds of prey*. ISAIAH is somewhat more copious, chap. xxxiv. 6, 7.

- " For JEHOVAH celebrateth a sacrifice in Botzra,
 " And a great slaughter in the land of Edom.
 " And the wild goats shall fall down with them;
 " And the bullocks, together with the bulls:
 " And their own land shall be drunken with their blood,
 " And their dust shall be enriched with fat."

These and other images Ezekiel has adopted, and has studiously amplified with singular ingenuity; and by exhausting all the imagery applicable to the subject, has in a manner

sometimes almost to disgust ; his language is pompous, solemn, austere, rough, and at times

ner made them his own. In the first prediction of the slaughter of Magog, the whole chapter consists of a most magnificent amplification of all the circumstances and apparatus of war, so that scarcely any part of the subject is left untouched ; he adds afterwards in a bold and unusual style—" Thus, Son of man, saith JEHOVAH, speak
 " unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the
 " field : assemble yourselves and come, gather yourselves
 " on every side to the banquet, which I prepare for you,
 " a great banquet on the mountains of Israel. Ye shall
 " eat flesh, and ye shall drink blood ; ye shall eat the flesh
 " of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of
 " the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bul-
 " locks, all of them fatlings of Bashan. Ye shall eat
 " fat till ye be satiated, and drink blood till ye be drunken
 " in the banquet which I have prepared for you. Ye
 " shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with
 " mighty men, and with men of valour, saith the Lord
 " JEHOVAH." EZEK. xxxviii. 17—20. In this I seem to read a poet, who is unwilling to omit any thing of the figurative kind which presents itself to his mind, and would think his poem deficient, if he did not adorn it with every probable fiction which could be added : and for this very reason I cannot help placing him rather in the middle than superior class. Observe how the author of the Apocalyps, who is in general an imitator, but endowed with a sublimer genius, and in whose prose all the splendour of poetry may be discerned, has conducted these sentiments of Ezekiel : " I saw an Angel standing in the
 " Sun ;

times unpolished: he employs frequent repetitions, not for the sake of grace or elegance, but

“ Sun ; and he cried with a loud voice unto the fowls
 “ that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather your-
 “ selves together unto the supper of the great God ; that
 “ ye may eat of the flesh of kings, and of captains, and
 “ the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and
 “ of them that sit upon them, and the flesh of all men,
 “ both free and bond, both small and great.” REV. xix.
 17, 18.

But Ezekiel goes yet further, so delighted is he with this image, so intent is he upon the by-paths of the Muses, that he gives even the trees, taking them for empires, to the birds, and their shades or ghosts he consigns to the infernal regions. Thus chap. xxxi. 13—15. “ Upon
 “ his trunk shall all the fowls of heaven remain, and all
 “ the beasts of the field shall be upon his branches. To
 “ the end that none of all the trees by the waters shall
 “ exalt themselves for their height, nor shoot up their top
 “ among the thick boughs ; neither their trees stand up in
 “ their height, all that drink water : for they are all delivered
 “ unto death to the nether parts of the earth in the midst
 “ of the children of men, with them that go down to
 “ the pit, &c.” In this we find novelty and variety, great fertility of genius, but no sublimity.

I had almost forgotten to mention, that Ezekiel lived at a period when the Hebrew language was visibly on the decline. And when we compare him with the Latin poets who succeeded the Augustine age, we may find some resemblance in the style, something that indicates the old age of poetry. M.

If

but from the vehemence of passion and indignation. Whatever subject he treats of, that he sedulously pursues, from that he rarely departs, but cleaves as it were to it; whence the connexion is in general evident and well preserved. In many respects he is perhaps excelled by the other prophets; but in that species of composition to which he seems by nature adapted, the forcible, the impetuous, the great and solemn, not one of the sacred writers is superior to him. His diction is sufficiently perspicuous, all his obscurity consists in the nature of the subject. Visions, (as for instance among others, those of Hosea, Amos, and Jeremiah) are necessarily dark and confused. The greater part of Ezekiel, towards the middle of the book especially, is poetical, whether we regard the matter or

If I may speak my mind freely of Ezekiel, I must confess I think his fault is neither a want of novelty nor of sublimity, but of grace and uniformity. There is so much inequality in his composition, that scarcely any figure is kept up without sinking into the *batbos*; and if he introduce in one line a grand image, he pays no attention to the supporting of it in the next. What the Gottingen professor remarks concerning the decline of the Hebrew language, evident in the poetry of this author, is very just. T.

the diction. His periods, however, are frequently so rude and incompact, that I am often at a loss how to pronounce concerning his performance in this respect.

Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, as far as relates to style, may be said to hold the same rank among the Hebrews, as Homer, Simonides, and Æschylus among the Greeks.

Hosea is the first in order of the minor prophets, and is, perhaps, Jonah excepted, the most ancient of them all. His style exhibits the appearance of very remote antiquity; it is pointed, energetic, and concise. It bears a distinguished mark of poetical composition, in that pristine brevity and condensation, which is observable in the sentences, and which later writers have in some measure neglected. This peculiarity has not escaped the observation of Jerome: "He is altogether," says he, speaking of this prophet, "laconic and sententious." But this very circumstance, which anciently was supposed, no doubt, to impart uncommon force and elegance, in the present ruinous state of the Hebrew literature, is productive of so much

² Pref. in xxi Proph.

obscurity,

obscurity, that although the general subject of this writer be sufficiently obvious, he is the most difficult and perplexed of all the prophets. There is, however, another reason for the obscurity of his style: Hosea prophesied during the reigns of the four kings of Judah, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah; the duration of his ministry, therefore, in whatever manner we calculate, must include a very considerable space of time; we have now only a small volume of his remaining, which, it seems, contains his principal prophecies; and these are extant in a continued series, with no marks of distinction as to the times in which they were published, or the subjects of which they treat. There is therefore no cause to wonder, if in perusing the prophecies of Hosea, we sometimes find ourselves in a similar predicament with those who consulted the scattered leaves of the Sibyl.

The style of Joel is essentially different from that of Hosea; but the general character of his diction, though of a different kind, is not less poetical. He is elegant, perspicuous, copious, and fluent; he is also sublime, animated, and energetic. In the
first

first and second chapters he displays the full force of the Prophetic Poetry, and shews how naturally it inclines to the use of metaphors, allegories, and comparisons. Nor is the connexion of the matter less clear and evident, than the complexion of the style: this is exemplified in the display of the impending evils, which gave rise to the prophecy; the exhortation to repentance; the promises of happiness and success both terrestrial and eternal to those who become truly penitent; the restoration of the Israelites; and the vengeance to be taken of their adversaries. But while we allow this just commendation to his perspicuity both in language and arrangement, we must not deny that there is sometimes great obscurity observable in his subject, and particularly in the latter part of the prophecy.

Jerome calls Amos "rude in speech, but "not in knowledge";" applying to him what St. Paul modestly professes of himself^o. Many have followed the authority of Jerome, in speaking of this prophet, as if he were indeed quite rude, ineloquent, and destitute of

^o Proœm. Comment. in Amos. ^o 2 Cor. xi. 6.

all the embellishments of composition. The matter is, however, far otherwise. Let any person who has candour and perspicacity enough to judge, not from the man but from his writings, open the volume of his predictions, and he will, I think, agree with me, that our shepherd "is not a whit behind the very chief of the prophets"¹⁰. He will agree that as in sublimity and magnificence he is almost equal to the greatest, so in splendour of diction, and elegance of expression he is scarcely inferior to any. The same celestial Spirit indeed actuated Isaiah and Daniel in the court, and Amos in the sheep-folds; constantly selecting such interpreters of the divine will as were best adapted to the occasion, and sometimes "from the mouth of babes and sucklings perfecting praise:" occasionally employing the natural eloquence of some, and occasionally making others eloquent.

The style of Micah is for the most part close, forcible, pointed, and concise; sometimes approaching the obscurity of Hosea: in many parts animated and sublime, and in general truly poetical.

¹⁰ 2 COR. xi. 5.

None of the minor prophets, however, seem to equal Nahum, in boldness, ardour, and sublimity. His prophecy too forms a regular and perfect poem; the exordium is not merely magnificent, it is truly majestic; the preparation for the destruction of Nineveh, and the description of its downfall and desolation are expressed in the most vivid colours, and are bold and luminous in the highest degree.

The style of Habbakkuk is also poetical; especially in his ode, which indeed may be accounted among the most perfect specimens of that class¹¹. The like remark will also apply to Zephaniah; but there is nothing very striking or uncommon either in the arrangement of his matter or the complexion of his style.

¹¹ On a very accurate perusal of Habbakkuk, I find him a great imitator of former poets, but with some new additions of his own; not however in the manner of Ezekiel, but with much greater brevity, and with no common degree of sublimity. Ezekiel, for the most part, through his extreme copiousness, flags behind those whom he imitates; Habbakkuk either rises superior, or at least keeps on an equality with them. M.

Of Obadiah there is little to be said; the only specimen of his genius extant being very short, and the greater part of it included in one of the prophecies of Jeremiah¹². Jonah and Daniel, I have already considered as mere historical commentaries.

Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, are the only remaining prophets. The first of these is altogether prosaic, as well as the greater part of the second; towards the conclusion of the prophecy there are some poetical passages, and those highly ornamented; they are also perspicuous, considering that they are the production of the most obscure of all the prophetic writers¹³. The last of the prophetic books, that of Malachi, is written in a kind of middle style, which seems to indicate that the Hebrew poetry, from the time of the Babylonish captivity, was in a declining state, and being past its prime and vigour, was then fast verging towards the debility of age.

¹² Compare OB. 1—9. with JER. xlix. 14, 15, 16, 7, 9, 10.

¹³ See chap. ix. x. and the beginning of xith.

Thus

Thus far I have thought proper to deliver my sentiments, as distinctly as I was able, concerning the writings of the prophets, and those parts which are to be accounted poetical or otherwise. This I did with a view of clearly explaining my conjecture (for I dare not dignify it with any higher appellation) concerning the Prophetic Poetry. A conjecture, which, though I will confess it is not without its difficulties, and which must, after all, depend in some degree upon opinion, yet I flatter myself, you will concur with me in admitting not to be utterly destitute of foundation.

I should now, according to the nature of my plan, proceed to speak of the Prophetic Poetry of the Greeks, if indeed any thing had been transmitted to us, even from their most celebrated oracles, deserving, I will not say, to be compared with the sacred prophets, but even to be mentioned at all. The fact is, there is no such poem now extant, nor do I believe there ever was one of that kind among the Greeks: a few verses there are indeed remaining, and those not above mediocrity; for the Pythian Apollo, if we may credit the Greeks themselves, was not always

upon the best terms with the Muses¹⁴. It appears, therefore, that he did not fail to excite the ridicule of sensible persons, not only for his ambiguous and enigmatical divinations, but for ignorance in the art of versification: nay, even the rude and superstitious, who gave him the amplest credit for the veracity of his predictions, could not help confessing, that he was a very indifferent poet¹⁵. Among

¹⁴ “ I find too that some of the Oracles of Apollo have not escaped ridicule in this respect, though the obscurity of prophecy renders them in general so difficult to decypher, that the hearers have no leisure to bestow on an examination of the metre.” Merc. in LUCIAN’S Dial. entitled *Jupiter Tragædus*.

“ A response from an Oracle in verse having been recited by one of the company—I have often wondered (said Diogenianus) at the meanness and imperfection of the verses which conveyed the oracular responses; especially considering that Apollo is the president of the Muses, and one should imagine, would no less interest himself in the style of his own predictions, than in the harmony of Odes and other Poetry: besides, that he certainly must be superior to Homer and Hesiod in poetic taste and ability. Notwithstanding this, we find many of the Oracles, both as to style and metre, deficient in prosody, and in every species of poetical merit.” PLUTARCH *Inq. why the Pythia now ceases to deliver her Oracles in verse*.

¹⁵ Just as the Bishop’s observation is, concerning the prophetic Oracles of the Greeks, yet whoever will be at the

Among the literature of the Romans, however, there is extant a much celebrated, and indeed admirable poem of this kind, no less remarkable for the elegance and perspicuity of the style, than for the obscurity and darkness of the subject: I speak of the fourth Eclogue of Virgil¹⁶, which it would be inexcusable to pass unnoticed in this place, since from the first ages of Christianity an opinion has prevailed, that this poem bore some remote relation to those genuine remains of prophecy, which have been the subject of this Lecture, and indeed that the substance of it was originally derived from some sacred fountain. The manner in which this could happen, I must confess, is not very easy to be explained; whether to account for the fact we have

the trouble of considering the predictions of Cassandra, in the Agamemnon of Æschylus, may easily perceive a peculiarity of imagery and style that would throw some light on the subject itself, as well as serve to illustrate the prophetic phraseology of the Hebrews. S. H.

¹⁶ The prophecy of the Sibyl in the sixth Æneid might also be referred to as an example; in it the prophetic ecstasy is so admirably expressed, that the art and imitative powers of Virgil may contribute not a little to enable us understand the language and manner of true prophecy. M.

recourse to the ancient Greek translation of the Scriptures, the publication of which was certainly many years anterior to the Roman poet; or whether we suppose that the author might apply to those translations, which were made from the sacred writings by some Hellenistic Jews, and which were handed about as the prophecies of the Sibyls¹⁷. However this may have been, there are so many, and so manifest indications of the fact in the poem itself, that no person who reads it attentively can retain a doubt upon this head. The sentiments, the imagery, even the language itself has so direct an agreement with the sacred prophets; the subject has so much of intrinsic sublimity and magnificence; and on the other hand it is enlivened with so much boldness and spirit, is indeed so free and elevated, that considering it as the production of the chastest and most reserved of all the later poets, there is something altogether mysterious in the fact, unless we suppose that he deduced his materials from some higher source than his own genius. Though

* See Bishop CHANDLER'S *Vindication of the Christian Religion*, chap. i. and GROTIUS ON MATT. ii. 1.

the subject has engaged the attention of some of the first literary characters in the world, the motive, the scheme, the intention of the poet still remains, and I fear ever will remain undeveloped. The history and state of the Roman commonwealth at the time point out no circumstance or character, which appears to bear a sufficient relation to the subject, or which could afford room for such great and magnificent predictions¹⁸. This I will

¹⁸ The learned are generally agreed, that the Eclogue in question cannot relate to Saloninus, a son of Pollio, born after the capture of Salona, who is spoken of by Servius, if any such person ever existed, since it appears from Dion and Appian, that the expedition of Pollio to Illyricum took place in the following year. Some have conjectured, that this poem relates to C. Asinius Gallus, a son of the same person, and indeed with much greater appearance of probability; since Asconius Pedianus reports, that he had heard from Gallus himself, that this poem was composed in honour of him. See SERV. *ad Eclog.* iv. 11. But Servius himself affirms, that Gallus was born in the preceding year, while Pollio was consul elect: and although such a boast might very well agree with the vanity of a man, who, Augustus himself said, would be desirous of acquiring the sovereignty after his death, though unequal to it; (TACIT. *Ann.* i. 13.) yet it is scarcely probable, that any poet, in common prudence, would predict any thing so magnificent of a son of Pollio.

Further,

will freely confess, that the more I have contemplated this extraordinary production in this

Further, why has he foretold this divine son to him as a consul only, and not as a father? which would have reflected much more honour on Pollio. Many, from these difficulties, have attributed the poet's compliment to Cæsar Octavius and to some child born in his family, as the certain heir to the empire. Julia, Marcellus, and Drusus, have all been mentioned. As to Drusus, neither his age nor person correspond to the prediction; and though the age of Marcellus might suit it better, yet the personal disagreement is the same. With respect to Julia, the daughter of Octavius, there can be no objection upon either account, if the Eclogue were written during the pregnancy of Scribonia, and that it was written before her delivery is credible from the invocation it contains to Lucina; "O, chaste Lucina, aid!"—But let it be remembered by those who adopt any of these hypotheses, who, and in what station Octavius then was; not emperor and Augustus, the sovereign Lord of the whole Roman empire, all which dignities became his only after the battle of Actium, nine years posterior to the date of this Eclogue; but a triumvir, equal only in authority with Antony at least, not to speak of Lepidus. How then could the poet presume to predict to any son of Octavius, if at that time any son had been born to him, the succession to the empire? But, if we should even grant what is really true, that no person more worthy or more proper could be found, or to whom these predictions would be better suited, than to some of the descendants of Octavius; and if even we should suppose that a son of his was at that time in being, still there is
one

this point of view, the less able I have felt myself to comprehend it. There is such a splendour

one argument sufficient to overturn the whole, and that is, that the Eclogue is inscribed to Pollio; for at that time, and even for some time after, Pollio was of the party of Antony, and in opposition to Octavius. Let us with this in our minds take a summary view of the actions of Pollio, after the death of Julius Cæsar; and let us pay some attention to the chronology of the times. In the year of Rome 711, C. Asinius Pollio having conducted the war against Sextus Pompeius, on his return from Spain delivered over his army to Antony, after his flight from Mutina. In the year 713, Pollio held Cisalpine Gaul, as Antony's lieutenant; and along with Ventidius hovered about the rear of Salvidienus, the lieutenant of Octavius, who was attempting to annoy Lucius Antonius: Lucius being besieged at Perusia, Pollio in vain attempted his relief, and afterwards retired to Ravenna: he held Venetia a long time subject to Antony; and after having performed great actions in that part of the world, joined Antony, bringing over with him, at the same time, Domitius Ænobarbus, and the fleet under his command. About the end of the year 714, the peace of Brundisium took place, the negociators of which were Pollio as consul, on the part of Antony, and Mæcenas on the part of Octavius, and Cocceius on the part of both, as their common friend; and about this time the ivth Eclogue of Virgil was written. In the year 715, Antony sent Pollio as his lieutenant against the Parthini into Illyricum; who triumphed over them in the month of October. Thus far VELLEIUS, APPIAN, and DIO. About this time a
private

splendour of style, such an elegance in the versification, as deceives us at first respecting the

private disagreement took place between Pollio and Octavius; and Octavius wrote some indecent verses against Pollio. MACROB. SATURN. ii. 14. From this time to the battle of Actium, which happened in 723, in the beginning of September, Pollio kept himself perfectly neutral, and took no part in the contest between Antony and Octavius. "I must not omit," says VELLEIUS, ii. 86. "a remarkable action and saying of Asinius Pollio. After the peace of Brundisium" (he should have said after his triumph) "he continued in Italy, nor did he ever see the queen, or, after the mind of Antony became enfeebled by his destructive passion, take any part in his affairs; and when Cæsar requested him to accompany him to the battle of Actium: The kindnesses, said he, which I have rendered Antony are greater in reality than those he has rendered me, but the latter are better known to the world. I will withdraw myself entirely from the contest, and I shall become the prey of the conqueror." From considering these facts, it appears to me altogether incredible, that Virgil should send, and inscribe to Pollio, a poem in praise of Octavius, and wholly written in celebration of his family.

Author's Note.

Whoever will compare the three prophecies of Isaiah contained in the second, eleventh, and sixty-fifth chapters, with the fourth Eclogue of Virgil, can hardly doubt: whether the same images, united in combinations opposite to the analogies of nature, applied to similar subjects, and by both writers in the way of prediction, must not have ultimately

obscurity of the matter. But on a nearer inspection of each particular, on a thorough examina-

ultimately originated in one common source, and the latter have been derived from the former. If so, the agreement in question may be rationally accounted for, especially if it appear that the Poet has himself referred to the Jewish Scriptures, as the fountain of such images, in the same manner as to the writings of Homer, &c. for others of Grecian origin. [See GEORGIC. B. iii. l. 12. and the Notes on Vathek, p. 269.]—It seems, however, by his Lordship's concession, that the mystery would be in a great measure solved, could it once be shewn, that the prophecy of Virgil were applicable to any child whose birth was expected at the time of his writing, different from him whom the Prophet had foretold. — His Lordship having scouted the pretensions of Servius and others in favour of any son of Pollio, and remarked that the Poet's prophecy would neither suit the age nor situation of Drusus or Marcellus, readily admits its congruity so far as a *son* is concerned, to the child with which Scribonia was at that time pregnant. Here the difficulty with his Lordship begins. For, how, considering the situation of Octavius at this period, could *his* child be the subject of such a prediction?—Why, in predicting the future greatness of a son of Octavius, should Virgil address his prediction to Pollio?—And, supposing these difficulties solved, how can the imagery of the prediction itself be reconciled to the subject of it?

Let us take each question in its order. 1. In stating the situation of Octavius, his Lordship has unwarily admitted a succession of facts, which, being posterior to the time

examination of the nature and force of the imagery and diction, so many things occur totally

time when the Eclogue was written, could not have been foreknown by Virgil, and therefore ought not to be brought into question. In the year 714, when all the horrors of a civil war were impending over Italy, a reconciliation was suddenly effected between Antony and Octavius, at the intervention of Pollio, Mæcenas and Cocceius Nerva. The result of this treaty was a partition of the Roman world between Octavius and Antony (for Lepidus they regarded as a cypher). When the ratification of this agreement was confirmed, and Antony departed to his province, nothing was left in the west to thwart the aims of Octavius, but what might arise from Pompey, who still commanded a fleet. To guard against any obstacle from this quarter, Octavius, instead of attempting, as had been projected with his colleague, to crush Pompey by violence, chose rather to conciliate his friendship. With this view therefore (as the marriage of Octavia with Antony had appeased her husband and brother) Octavius married Scribonia, the sister of Pompey's wife; and the expedient, for a short time, was not without effect. When this Eclogue then was written, Octavius was master of Italy and that part of the empire which, under its own name, comprehended the world. At peace with his colleagues abroad, having nothing to apprehend at home, and invested with absolute power to compose those commotions by which the empire had been so lately convulsed, what might not Octavius hope—or what might not the flattery of a Poet, who in circumstances less favourable had stiled him a God, now prompt his aspiring mind, and,

totally different from the general fashion of the Roman authors, so altogether foreign to the

and, on the ground of a divine prediction, to expect would be the future greatness of his son?

But, 2, it is asked: Why Virgil on such an occasion should address this prediction to Pollio, who had been not the friend of Octavius, but of Antony?

In answer to this inquiry, it may be observed, that the private misunderstanding, which his Lordship has alledged to have arisen between Pollio and Octavius, a year or more *after* Pollio had been consul, is totally beside the question; except as it serves to shew that, from the peace at Brundisium till the rise of this disagreement, Octavius and Pollio were friends. But whatever political enmity might have existed between them prior to that treaty, they were both unanimous in the patronage of genius. It was whilst Pollio held the territory of Venice for Antony, that his acquaintance with Virgil commenced; and as the splendour of the Poet's talents, which broke through the obscurity and depression of his condition, had attracted the notice of Pollio; so, by his means, they obtained the favour of Octavius: for it is agreed on all hands, that Pollio either in person, or by the intervention of some friend (perhaps Varus, see Ecl. IX.) brought Virgil to the knowledge of Octavius; who restored to him his patrimony which the soldiers had usurped. Yet, widely as Octavius and Pollio might have differed before the treaty of pacification, there is no reason to suppose them, after its confirmation, upon any other than an intimate footing; at least, till that *private* misunderstanding to which his Lordship has adverted. Now, what could be more natural,

the conce tions of the people of that age and nation, that it is not easy to believe it was

tural, what more consistent with the nicest address, than that Virgil, whose poetic talents had first procured him the protection of Pollio, and by his means the munificence of Octavius, should offer through his first patron, who was not only at this time consul, but had been chiefly instrumental, by negotiating the peace, to the establishment of Octavius in power, a poetic compliment to his greater benefactor, on a prediction believed to point out his son?

Having thus answered two of the questions proposed, it remains to consider the 3d. Virgil, in the first Eclogue, which was written on regaining his estate, confines himself chiefly to his own concerns and those of his Mantuan neighbours, but in the present his voice is raised to a loftier strain. The *arbusta humilesque myricæ* are the concerns of private life contrasted with *Sylvæ*, such as belong to the empire at large: thus, Rome is said in the first Eclogue “to rear her head as high above other cities, as the tall cypress above the lowly shrubs.”—*Si canimus sylvas, &c.* “if woods be my theme, let the woods be worthy of a consul.” This imagery is by no means casual; for we learn from Suetonius (Jul. Cæs. c. xix.) that the woods had been lately made a consular care.—*Ultima Cumæi venit jam carminis ætas*: “The last age of the Cumæan prophecy is now come.” It is highly deserving of notice, that Cicero, in his treatise on Divination, has not only referred to the Sibylline verses as containing a divine prediction of some future king, but also mentioned an expectation that the interpreter of them would apply that prediction, in the senate, to Cæsar. This prophecy had possibly

was perfectly understood even on its first publication. But when a foreign interpretation,

sibly its origin in the Jewish Scriptures, and it is not unlikely that the partiality of Julius towards the Jews, might have concurred with other circumstances to point the application. But however this were, an expectation had been long prevalent in the East of an extraordinary personage, who was to establish universal empire; and the prediction whence this expectation arose, was probably brought to Rome, by the persons whom the Senate had deputed, to search in different countries for prophetic verses, to supply the loss of those which had perished in the capitol. Such however is the affinity between the prediction spoken of by Cicero, and that which Tacitus (Hist. V. 13.) has referred to the Jewish Scriptures, as to leave no room for surprize if we see Virgil, from the notion of both having a common aim, adopt the one to adorn the other; for, as the former was thought applicable to Julius, and the latter to Vespasian or his son, why might not Virgil consolidate both, and apply them to the son of Octavius? And if Tacitus were acquainted with the Jewish Scriptures, why might not Virgil be also? His writings shew that his researches were universal, and upon every principle of just construction, if *the MUSES* and *the AONIAN mount* be emblematical of *the GRECIAN poesy*, his *IDUMÆAN palms* must equally signify the *poetic scriptures of the JEWS*. [See Georg. iii. 12.]—*Ultima ætas*, &c. “the last age, of the Cumæan prediction is now “come.” Whatever were the particulars of this prediction, the *time* set for its completion coincides with *that* in the Scriptures. [The Sibylline oracles in their present

VOL. II. I condition,

tation, suggested by the writings of the Hebrews (the full force and importance of which it

condition, by the way, are so sophisticated, that no stress can be rested on their testimony without the support of collateral proof. It will, however, deserve to be considered; If the Heathens were ever in possession of a genuine prophecy, which came not from the Jews or the Christians?] *Magnus*, &c. "The great order of ages again begins: the Virgin is already returning: the "Saturnian rule returns." This commencement of the ages perfectly agrees with Isaiah, who styles the child he foretels, "the Father of ages." By the return of Astræa, Virgil alludes to the justice he had himself experienced at the hands of Octavius. The renewal of the Saturnian rule will be best explained by referring to the Poet's account of its former state:

"He [*Saturn*] by just laws embodied all the train,
 "Who roam'd the hills, and drew them to the plain:
 "There fix'd; and Latium call'd the new abode,
 "Whose friendly shores conceal'd the latent God.
 "These realms in peace the monarch long controll'd;
 "And bless'd the nations with an age of gold."

Jam nova progenies cælo demittitur alto: "A new progeny
 "is now sent down from high heaven." Sent down in opposition to the manner of Saturn's descent:

"—Saturn fled before victorious Jove,
 "Driven down, and banish'd from the realms above."

The aid of Lucina is invoked in favour, *nascenti puero*,
 "of the boy when he comes to the birth." It is not
 impro-

it is impossible the poet himself could have comprehended) serves to unravel the difficulties,

improbable that Virgil was induced to transfer the Sibylline prediction from Julius, in whom it had palpably failed, to this expected son of Octavius, from Isaiah's having dwelt so minutely on the infancy of the person foretold.—*Quo ferrea primum, &c.* “with whom the iron age (or “age of war) shall cease, and the golden age shall rise “over the world.” Though Virgil, when Scribonia, instead of a son, was delivered of a daughter, discovered his mistake as to the PERSON *predicted*, he still continued confident in respect to the *events*, and therefore when he resumed the prophecy, from a persuasion that he could not a second time err, he makes the Sibyl herself point out Augustus as the person so often promised :

“ Hic Cæsar, & omnis Iulii

“ Progenies, magnum cœli ventura sub axem.

“ Hic vir, hic est, tibi quem promitti sæpius audis,

“ Augustus Cæsar, Divi genus aurea condet

“ Secula qui rursus Latio, regnata per arva

“ Saturno quondam ; super & Garamantas & Indos

“ Proferet imperium, &c.” ÆN. vi. line 179.

“ Turn, turn thine eyes ! see here thy race divine,

“ Behold thy own imperial Roman line :

“ Cæsars with all the Julian name survey ;

“ See where the glorious ranks ascend to day !—

“ This—this is he ! the chief so long foretold,

“ To bless the land where Saturn rul'd of old,

“ And give the Latian realms a second age of gold !

ties, and to enlighten all the obscurities of this extraordinary poem; when I consider this,

“ The promis’d prince, Augustus the divine,
 “ Of Cæsar’s race, and Jove’s immortal line !
 “ This mighty chief, this empire shall extend
 “ O’er Indian realms, to earth’s remotest end.”

Till, however, a daughter was born, Virgil remained undeceived. The mention of the golden age rising again over the world, is sufficient proof that the Virgin before described as returning was Astræa, and as in the Georgics he asserts, that her latest footsteps on earth, were discernible in rural retreats :

————— ———— ————“ last with you
 “ Justitia linger’d, ere she quite withdrew.”

So by adding, “ Apollo now reigns,” he seems to intimate, that the powers of poetry had triumphed over oppression, and procured him the interposition of justice, in the restoration of his pasture and flocks. But though this interpretation may agree with the context, the tenth verse will admit of a fuller sense. After invoking aid from Lucina, it is added, “ thy own Apollo now reigns,” that is, *the Sibylline prediction is begun to be fulfilled*. As Apollo was the God of prophecy, it was in reference to his reigning under this character that Lucina is invoked to assist in the fulfilment of the prediction himself had inspired, by granting to the child a propitious birth.—[It is well known, that Augustus afterward affected to be patronized by Apollo, to resemble him, to assume his dress, to be thought his son, and to pay him divine honours as his tutelary deity; now what better account of so extraordinary a conduct

this, I own I am at a loss at what point to stop the licentiousness of conjecture upon this

conduct can be given, than that all was done with the view of arrogating to himself the Sibyl's prediction, which Virgil in the *Æneid* has appropriated to him?—*Teque adeo*, &c. “And in thy consulship, O Pollio, in thine, shall the glory of this age begin to commence, and the great months thence to proceed.” “The glory of this age (the *age predicted*) shall begin to commence.” It was in the consulship of Pollio that the marriage of Octavius to Scribonia took place, the great months therefore are the months of her pregnancy, which immediately followed her marriage.—*Te duce*, &c. “Under your management, if any vestiges of our wickedness remain, they shall be effaced, and the world delivered.” This plainly refers to the influence of Pollio in negotiating the treaty at Brundisium, and also to the further exertion of his consular power.—*Ille Deum vitam accipiat*, &c. “He shall receive the life of gods,” &c. Similar, though still bolder, expressions are applied to Augustus, in the first *Georgic*, verse the 24th.—*Pacatumque reget patriis virtutibus orbem*. “And shall govern the world at peace, with his FATHER'S virtues.” To whom could this apply, but a son of Octavius, and the son whom, it was believed, the prediction had foretold? Hence follows the description of the golden age corresponding with the imagery of Isaiah, to verse 26. *At sin.u'*, &c. “But as soon as thou shalt be able to read the praises of heroes, and the achievements of thy father, and to understand what the energy of virtue can effect, the spacious field shall by degrees become yellow with

this subject: and indeed what imagination occasionally suggests, I dare scarcely express.

I will

“the soft ear.” That is, before you be old enough to view those plains which have so lately been the theatre of heroism and horror, the devastations of civil discord shall gradually disappear, and the tranquil occupations of husbandry imperceptibly change their face. *Pauca tamen suberunt prisca vestigia fraudis, &c.* “But there shall remain beneath the surface some traces of ancient fraud,” &c. This obviously alludes to Pompey, who still retained the command of his fleet; whilst “the other wars” seem to imply the contests to be looked for in the East, whither Antony was gone, and who therefore, in compliment to Pollio, is stiled “another Achilles.” The Poet after this resumes the images expressive of the golden age as before. —*Care Deum soboles, magnum Jovis incrementum, &c.* “O beloved offspring of the Gods, great increase of Jove!” &c. is not only consonant to the language of scriptural prediction, but in the sense of Virgil suitable to none but a Cæsar. See the 6th Æneid and 2d Georgic before referred to.

There are several other passages of the Eclogue which, in this attempt at illustration, have been omitted, for the sake of brevity, although they would have reflected additional light on the interpretation which is here offered. Such images of the Poet as approach the nearest to those of the Prophet are also purposely passed over; because, both in Virgil and Isaiah, they have no specific destination, but are used as generally symbolical of innocence and happiness; and that this was the more obvious mode of explaining the prophetic scriptures is certain, for the Jews,
from

I will only say, the fact has something in it so extraordinary, so miraculous to my conceptions,

from those very images in the Prophet, have constantly inferred, that their promised Messiah would be a *temporal Saviour*.

But there will be no necessity to enlarge on this head; for notwithstanding what is advanced in the Lecture, on the incongruity of Virgil's language to his subject, upon any other idea than that of a mysterious relation to the Messiah and his kingdom, it is the voluntary concession of his Lordship in the note, "that no person could be any where found more worthy of this prophetic Eclogue, nor whom it would more aptly fit, or with whom its contents would better quadrate, than a son of Octavius, provided it could be shewn that a son was born to him, in the year when Pollio was consul."

Now though it be impossible to supply the proof, which his Lordship requires, yet so far as the spirit of the postulate is concerned, a satisfactory answer can be given. For notwithstanding upon my hypothesis (which perfectly harmonizes with the history of facts) Octavius had no child, till the year *after* Pollio was consul, and then only a *daughter*; yet, as Scribonia became pregnant in the consulship of Pollio, and the Eclogue was written in that very year, Virgil (whatever the coincidences of the time with the Sibylline prediction might have led him to expect) certainly could not know, without the gift of prescience, the sex of this unborn child.

I am duly sensible that an apology is necessary to the Reader for so long a detention from the Lectures that follow; but as (notwithstanding his Lordship's opinion, that

conceptions, that I am sometimes half inclined to fancy, that what Socrates, in the *Io* of Plato, says (probably in his usual tone of irony) of poets in general, might have actually come to pass: "Hence," says the philosopher, "the God, having by possessing
 " their minds deprived them of their natural reason, makes use of them, as well
 " as of the prophets and diviners, as his
 " ministers, to the end, that we who hear
 " them should understand, that matters of
 " so great importance are not uttered by
 " men in their sober senses, but that it is
 " the God himself who utters them, and
 " addresses us by their mouths."

" though the subject has engaged the attention of some of
 " the first literary characters in the world, the motive,
 " the scheme, the intention of the Poet still remains undeveloped ;") the subject does not seem to have been hitherto discussed with the precision it deserved, I was willing to submit it to the public in a new point of view, with the hope, that what appeared convincing to myself, might be favourably received by others. S. H.

Perhaps a still more decisive objection against the hypothesis to which Mr. H. alludes is, that the very prophecies, from which Virgil has apparently copied his imagery, do not seem to have any relation to the *first* coming of the Messiah, but seem wholly to relate to that triumphant *second* coming, which is yet unaccomplished.

T.

L E C-

OF ELEGIAC POETRY.

LECTURE XXII.

OF THE NATURE AND ORIGIN OF THE
HEBREW ELEGY; AND OF THE LA-
MENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH.

The nature and origin of the Hebrew Elegy traced into the solemn expressions of grief exhibited in their funeral ceremonies.—The office and function of professed mourners: the dirges, which were sung by them, were short, metrical, and sententious; many of the lamentations, which are extant in the Prophets, were composed in imitation of them.—The whole of the Lamentations of Jeremiah constructed upon the same principle.—The general conduct and form of that poem; the nature of the verse; the subject and the style.

THAT Poetry is indebted for its origin to the more vehement affections of the human mind, has been, I apprehend, very clearly evinced. The distribution of it into its different species is not, however, exactly regulated by the nature and order of the passions; though I think this is a circumstance which ought not entirely to be disregarded. There are, indeed, some species of poetry which admit of every passion, such as the Lyric; and there are some which

6 scarcely

scarcely admit of any, such as the Didactic : there are others, however, which are peculiarly adapted to particular passions, tragedy for instance ; and we have already had occasion to explain the nature of the passions which are congenial to the prophetic Muse. There is a distinct species of poetry, which is appropriated solely to one particular passion ; and, what is worth remarking, we have never known a people, who might be said to have made any proficiency in poetry, who had not a peculiar form of poem, invented purposely for the expression of sorrow, and appropriated wholly to plaintive subjects :

“ *Λινος*, originally, among the Egyptians, a song or “ *ballad*.” HEROD. ii. 79. “ Herodotus remarks, that “ this kind of song was very common in Phœnicia and “ Cyprus. Why, therefore, may not the word *λινος* “ (*linos*) be derived from the Arabic *lin*, *lenis*, to be tender, “ *soft* : in Conjug. ii. to *soften* or *make tender* ?” H.

See a note on this subject on Lecture xiii. and the passage there cited from the *Orestes* of Eurip.

ΑΙΛΙΝΟΝ ΑΙΛΙΝΟΝ αρχαν θανάτου
Βαρβαροι λιγυρουν ΑΙ, ΑΙ,
Ασιαδιφωνα.—κ. λ.

The *Αιλινος* (*ailinos*) in this passage, appears to be compounded of the elegiac ΑΙ (*ai*) and *λινος* (*linos*). If so, it will correspond with the *λινος* (*linos*) mentioned by Herodotus, and referred to by Dr. Hunt in the above note. S. H.

This

This species of poem the Greeks, and most nations after them, distinguish by the name of *Elegy*: the Hebrews call it *Kinah* or *Nebi*, both which are significant of sorrow, or lamentation.

The genius and origin of this poem among the Hebrews may be clearly traced into their manner of celebrating their funeral rites. It may indeed more properly be termed the dictate of Nature than of Custom, to follow to the grave the remains of a friend with grief and lamentation. The ancient Hebrews were not ashamed of obeying the voice of nature on this occasion, and of liberally pouring forth the effusions of a bleeding heart. The language of grief is simple and unaffected; it consists of a plaintive, intermitted, concise form of expression, if indeed a simple exclamation of sorrow may deserve such an appellation.

“O father! O my country! O house of Priam^a!”

exclaims Andromache in the tragedy: nor less pathetic is the complaint of the tender father in the Sacred History, on the loss of

^a CICERO Tusc. Quæst. lib. iii.

his beloved, though disobedient son; "O my son, Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!" There will not, therefore, be occasion for any laboured disquisition concerning that kind of solemn dirge which was used at funerals; but since the sacred writers afford many examples to this purpose, I shall select one or two. The Prophet of Bethlehem brought the corpse of the man of God, who was slain by the lion, back to the city, that he might mourn over him and bury him. He placed him in his own sepulchre, and they wept over him, saying, "Alas, my brother!" So in Jeremiah, **JEREMIAH** declares of Joachim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah:

"They shall not lament him, Ah my brother, or
" ah sister!

"They shall not lament him, Ah Lord, or ah
" his glory!"

These

³ 2 SAM. xix. 4.

⁴ 1 KINGS xiii. 30.

⁵ JER. xxii. 18. "In the text it is written *חיה*, with the Arabic suffix, instead of the Hebrew; of which many instances are to be found in the Scriptures. But perhaps the letter *ח* may be radical, and not the pronominal suffix: *Ah Lord!* (and not *my Lord*) *ah Glory!*
" *Alas!*

These and similar exclamations were sufficient for the simple expression of natural and unaffected sorrow. But wayward grief is frequently desirous of a more complete and ostentatious display of its feelings; it studies not only its own alleviation, by publishing its uneasiness, but endeavours to incite and allure others into a society in affliction. Thus when Abner fell a sacrifice to the treachery of Joab, David not being privy to the action, and in truth extremely afflicted on account of it; yet, from the difficulty of his situation, and the infant state of his authority, not daring to punish the murderer, he fulfils his duty both to himself and to the deceased in the eyes of the people, by attending the funeral in the character of chief mourner: "and he lifted up his voice and wept at the sepulchre, and all the people wept with him;" and then by the united aid of poetry and music, he further stimu-

"*Alas! the vanity of regal splendour and majesty!* The LXX and the VULG. do not acknowledge the suffix; either here or in the preceding member." H. Three MSS. have מוֹר, according to the Masoretic *Keri*: see Bib. Heb. MICHAELIS in loc. Codex Orat. 42. In the margin it has מוֹר. See Bib. Heb. HOUBIGANT. The LXX omit the word. *Author's Note.*

lates

lates their affliction: "and the king lamented
"Abner, and said:"

Did Abner fall a mean and guilty slave?

With goary fetters were his limbs defil'd?

Lo, abject treachery snar'd th' uncautious brave;
And wily fraud his honest heart beguil'd!

"and again all the people wept over him⁶."

Thus, a certain ostentatious zeal, which frequently accompanies real sorrow, is apt to persuade men, that it is impossible to pay too much respect to the memory of departed friends; that intemperance of passion too, which is always observable in these cases, which is self-indulgent to excess, and is more inclined to irritate than to soothe; in a word, opinion or fashion, which governs and misleads the bulk of mankind, easily persuades them that it is an indispensable duty incumbent upon the living to afflict themselves for the sake of the dead. Each of these causes has contributed to establish that custom, which prevailed in Palestine, in Phrygia⁷, and afterwards among the Greeks and Ro-

⁶ 2 SAM. iii. 33, 34.

⁷ See JOS. SCALIGER *Conjectanea in Varronem de Ling. Lat.* p. 76. edit. R. Steph.

mans, of engaging mercenary mourners to weep at their funerals. This office generally fell to the lot of the women, either because it was supposed more congenial to the general imbecility of the female mind, or because, from the flexibility and softness of their nature, and from their tender and plaintive tone of voice, they were supposed more capable of working upon the affections. After the custom was once established, we find no scarcity of these professional mourners, well accomplished in all the discipline of lamentation and woe, and with tears always at command for a reasonable stipend. As in all other arts, so in this, perfection consisted in the exact imitation of nature. The funereal dirges were therefore composed in general upon the model of those complaints which flow naturally and spontaneously from the afflicted heart: the sentences were abrupt, mournful, pathetic, simple, and unembellished; on one account, indeed, more elaborate and artificial, because they consisted of verse, and were chanted to music*.

* See MATT. ix. 23. and LIGHTFOOT Exercitat. Hebr. and Talmud. in locum.

Many

Many vestiges of this custom are found in the writings of the Prophets: for the predictions of calamity impending over states and empires are often replete with elegance, and generally assume the form of a funereal song. But this remark will be more clearly evidenced by a few examples; and these examples will serve at the same time to illustrate what has been alledged concerning this custom. Hear, ⁹ says the prophet Amos, addressing the Israelites, and denouncing vengeance and destruction against them, and their government,

Hear my voice, O Israel, hear!

Whilst I thy fate deplore:

Thy virgin daughter, Sion! falls—

She falls to rise no more!

And a little after ¹⁰;

Through the streets, and through the plains,

The doleful rumour flies;

And skilful mourners raise their voice

In sad funereal cries.

⁹ Amos v. 1, 2.

¹⁰ Ib. v. 16. The particle *בְּ* in the last clause ought probably to be placed at the beginning of that clause. So the SYR. and VULG. read it. See CAPELL. *Sac. Crit.* B. iv. C. xiii. i. *Author's Note.*

And

And in Jeremiah, on a similar occasion, JEHOVAH of Hosts thus addresses his people:

Let those well-taught in Sorrow's school

Resound the notes of woe;

And mournful music, through the land,

In solemn concord flow;

Till tears shall stream from every eye,

Till every heart shall fear.—

Hark, 'tis the mourner's voice that sounds!

'Tis Sion's dirge I hear!

Vanquish'd, enthrall'd, to plunder giv'n,

The haughty city falls;

Shrill shrieks of woe aloud resound,

While ruin shakes her walls.—

"We go—deserted and forlorn,

"To rove from shore to shore;

"These long-lov'd seats no more to view,

"These pleasant plains no more."

Yet hear!—'tis heaven's most-high decree!

The solemn rites prepare!

Let Sion's daughters raise the dirge,

Replete with wild despair.

The regal dome, the sacred fane,

Stern Death invades, and wastes the land;

The pride of Israel strews the plain,

Like sheaves beneath the reaper's hand.

"JER. ix. 17—22.

Many instances of the same kind occur throughout the Prophets, in which, as in these, there is a direct allusion to the institution from which they originated. There are also many other passages evidently of the same kind, although the funeral ceremonies be not immediately referred to; and the peculiar elegance of these we shall not perceive, unless some regard be paid to the object to which they allude. The examples that I have produced are, I apprehend, sufficient to indicate the nature and origin of this species of poetry, and to demonstrate, that these artificial complaints were originally formed on the model, and expressed in the language of real sorrow. Hence also it will be apparent, in what manner, and by what gradations, the *Kinab*, or Lamentations of the Hebrews, assumed the form of a regular poem: but for the further elucidation of this subject, it may not be improper to examine the Lamentations of Jeremiah, the most remarkable poem of this kind extant, according to the principles of these funereal compositions; for unless we examine it in this manner, and by this criterion, it will be impossible

impossible to form a right judgment concerning it.

I shall endeavour to treat of this extraordinary production in the following order: First, of its nature and form in general; secondly, of the metre or versification; and lastly, of the subject, the sentiments, and imagery.

The Lamentations of Jeremiah (for the title is properly and significantly plural) consist of a number of plaintive effusions, composed upon the plan of the funeral dirges, all upon the same subject, and uttered without connexion as they rose in the mind, in a long course of separate stanzas. These have afterwards been put together, and formed into a collection or correspondent whole. If any-Reader, however, should expect to find in them an artificial and methodical arrangement of the general subject, a regular disposition of the parts, a perfect connexion and orderly succession in the matter, and with all this, an uninterrupted series of elegance and correctness, he will really expect what was foreign to the Prophet's design. In the character of a mourner, he celebrates in plaintive strains the ob-

sequies of his ruined country ; whatever presented itself to his mind in the midst of desolation and misery, whatever struck him as particularly wretched and calamitous, whatever the instant sentiment of sorrow dictated, he pours forth in a kind of spontaneous effusion. He frequently pauses, and, as it were, ruminates upon the same object ; frequently varies and illustrates the same thought with different imagery, and a different choice of language ; so that the whole bears rather the appearance of an accumulation of corresponding sentiments, than an accurate and connected series of different ideas, arranged in the form of a regular treatise. I would not be understood to insinuate, that the author has paid no regard whatever to order or arrangement ; or that transitions truly elegant from one subject, image, or character, to another, are not sometimes to be found ; this only I wished to remark, that the nature and design of this poem (being in reality a collection of different sentiments or subjects, each of which assumes the form of a funeral dirge) neither require, nor even admit of a methodical arrangement. The whole poem, however, may be divided into
five

five parts; in the first, second, and fourth, the Prophet addresses the people in his own person, or else personifies Jerusalem, and introduces that city as a character; the third part is supposed to be uttered by the chorus of Jews, represented by their leader¹², after the manner of the Greek tragedies: and in the fifth, the whole nation of the Jews, on being led into captivity, pour forth their united complaints to Almighty God. This last, as well as the others, is divided into twenty-two periods, according to the number of the letters of the alphabet; with this difference, that in the four other parts the initial letters of each period exactly correspond with the alphabetical order. And from this circumstance we have been enabled to form some little judgment concerning the Hebrew metres.

¹² Thus in ver. 14. the *אני* is in the constructive for the absolute form. The SYR. omits the pronoun. See a note on Lect. xiii. So also it appears the same word ought to be understood Ps. cxliv. 2. Compare likewise Ps. xviii. 48. xlvii. 4. See Pocock *Not. in Port. Mos. p. 60.* "LAM. iii. 14. two MSS. have *אני*. And "observe, that in MSS. the plural *אנ* is often expressed " *אנ*." K. *Author's Note.*

The acrostic or alphabetical poetry of the Hebrews was certainly intended to assist the memory, and was confined altogether to those compositions, which consisted of detached maxims or sentiments without any express order or connexion¹³. The same custom is said to have been prevalent, indeed is said still to prevail in some degree, among the Syrians, the Persians, and the Arabs¹⁴. With how much propriety the Prophet has employed this form of composition, on the present occasion, is evident from what has been said concerning the nature of this poem. The manner and order of this kind of verse is as follows: Each of the five parts, or grand divisions is subdivided into twenty-two periods, or stanzas; these periods in the three first parts are all of them triplets, in

¹³ M. Michaelis very justly remarks, that except the Lamentations of Jeremiah, and the xxxviiith Psalm, none of the alphabetic poems of the Hebrews rise in any degree above mediocrity. A certain indication, that however useful this kind of discrimination might be on some occasions, in assisting the memory of children and the vulgar, yet such minute arts are in general inconsistent with true genius. T.

¹⁴ See ASSEMAN *Bibliothec. Oriental.* Vol. III. p. 63, 180, 188, 328.

other words, consist each of three lines, only, in each of the two former parts, there is one period consisting of four lines¹⁵. In the four first parts, the initial letter of each period follows the order of the alphabet; but the third part is so very regular, that every line in the same period begins with the same letter, so as necessarily to ascertain the length of every verse or line in that poem: indeed, even in the others, though the lines are not distinctly marked in this manner, it is no difficult matter to ascertain their limits, by resolving the sentences into their constituent members. By this mode of computation it appears, that in the fourth part all the periods consist of distichs¹⁶, as also in the fifth, which is not acrostic: but in this last part I must remark another peculiarity, namely, that the lines are extremely short, whereas in all the rest they are long.

The length of these metres is worthy of notice; we find in this poem lines or verses,

¹⁵ In Chap. i. 1. in Chap. ii. p.

¹⁶ But the period ν as it is now read, can neither be conveniently distributed into two, nor into three verses.

Author's Note.

which are evidently longer by almost one half, than those which occur usually, and on other occasions. The length of them seems to be, on an average, about twelve syllables; there are a few which do not quite amount to that number, and there are a few which perhaps exceed it by two or three syllables: for although nothing certain can be determined concerning the number of syllables (in truth I pay no attention to the fictions of the Masorites) there is room, nevertheless, for very probable conjecture. We are not to suppose this peculiar form of versification utterly without design or importance: on the contrary, I am persuaded, that the Prophet adopted this kind of metre as being more diffuse, more copious, more tender, in all respects better adapted to melancholy subjects. I must add, that in all probability the funeral dirges, which were sung by the mourners, were commonly composed in this kind of verse; for whenever, in the prophets, any funereal lamentations occur, or any passages formed upon that plan, the versification is, if I am not mistaken, of this protracted kind. If this then be the case, we have discovered a true legitimate form

form of Elegy in the poetry of the Hebrews. It ought, however, to be remarked, that the same kind of metre is sometimes, though rarely, employed upon other occasions by the sacred Poets, as it was indeed by the Greeks and Romans. There are, moreover, some poems manifestly of the elegiac kind, which are composed in the usual metre, and not in unconnected stanzas, according to the form of a funeral dirge.

Thus far in general as to the nature and method of the poem, and the form of the versification; it remains to offer a few remarks concerning the subject and the style.

That the subject of the Lamentations is the destruction of the holy city and temple, the overthrow of the state, the extermination of the people, and that these events are described as actually accomplished, and not in the style of prediction merely, must be evident to every reader. Though some authors of considerable reputation¹⁷ have imagined this poem to have been composed on the death of king Josiah. The Prophet, indeed, has so copiously, so tenderly, and poe-

¹⁷ JOSEPHUS, JEROME, USSERIUS, &c.

tically bewailed the misfortunes of his country, that he seems completely to have fulfilled the office and duty of a mourner. In my opinion, there is not extant any poem, which displays such a happy and splendid selection of imagery in so concentrated a state. What can be more elegant and poetical, than the description of that once flourishing city, lately chief among the nations, sitting in the character of a female, solitary, afflicted, in a state of widowhood, deserted by her friends, betrayed by her dearest connections, imploring relief, and seeking consolation in vain? What a beautiful personification is that of "the Ways of Sion mourning because none are come to her solemn feasts?" How tender and pathetic are the following complaints?

" Is this nothing to all you who pass along the
" way? behold and see,

" If there be any sorrow, like unto my sorrow,
" which is inflicted on me;

" Which JEHOVAH inflicted on me in the day of
" the violence of his wrath.

" For these things I weep, my eyes stream with
" water;

" Because

“ Because the comforter is far away, that should
“ tranquilize my soul :

“ My children are desolate, because the enemy
“ was strong ¹⁸.”

But to detail its beauties would be to transcribe the entire poem. I shall make but one remark relative to certain passages, and to the former part of the second alphabet in particular. If, in this passage, the Prophet should be thought by some to affect a style too bold and energetic for the expression of sorrow, let them only advert to the greatness of the subject, its importance, sanctity, and solemnity ; and let them consider that the nature of the performance absolutely required these to be set forth in a style suitable, in some degree at least, to their inherent dignity ; let them attentively consider these things, and I have not a doubt, but they will readily excuse the sublimity of the Prophet.

¹⁸ LAM. i. 12, and 16. In the last verse the word עָנִי is not repeated in the old translations.

LECTURE XXIII.

OF THE REMAINING ELEGIES OF THE HEBREWS.

Many poems of this kind still extant in the writings of the Hebrews.—One collection of Elegies or Lamentations appears to be lost.—Elegies in Ezekiel.—Many passages in Job may be accounted Elegiac.—About a seventh part of the book of Psalms consists of Elegies.—A perfect specimen of elegiac poetry from the Psalms.—The Lamentation of David over Saul and Jonathan explained: attempted in English verse.

IN the last Lecture the nature and origin of the Hebrew Elegy was explained; the form and commencement of that species of poetry was traced into the solemn dirges which were chanted at funerals by the professed mourners; and this was confirmed by instances taken from those short Elegies or Lamentations which occur in the Prophets, and by an accurate examination of that remarkable poem, the Lamentations of Jeremiah. I shall now treat of some other poems, which, although they do not exactly assume the form of a funereal dirge, are nevertheless to be comprehended in this class.

That

That the Hebrews were formerly possessed of some collection of Elegies or Lamentations, which has not been transmitted to us, we may understand from that passage of sacred history¹, in which mention is made of the solemn mourning publicly celebrated at the funeral of Josiah; where it appears that a poem, composed for the occasion by Jeremiah the prophet, amongst others had a place. Though the book, which is on this occasion referred to, and which probably contained the most excellent of the Hebrew Elegies, appears to be lost, there are still extant many specimens of this kind of poetry; whence we may reasonably infer, that no species of composition was more in use among the Hebrews than the elegiac, the ode perhaps only excepted.

In the first place, beside those short dirges, which occur in the writings of almost all the prophets, as was before remarked, there are some in Ezekiel, which are actually distinguished by the title of Lamentations, and which may with the utmost propriety be referred to the class of Elegies. Among these

¹ 2 CHRON. XXXV. 25.

are the two Lamentations concerning Tyre, and the king of Tyre². In these, though the intent of the prophet be to denounce vengeance and punishment against these objects of the divine wrath, rather than to lament their misfortunes; and though he succeed in his aim of exciting terror instead of pity, yet the mournful nature of the subject fully corresponds with the title, and both the matter and the sentiments bear some degree of resemblance to the funeral songs. According to the custom which prevailed on those solemn occasions, the glory, riches, and power of the deceased are pompously enumerated; and thus by contrasting his former prosperity with the present calamity, the effect is considerably augmented. As for the two prophecies³, in which the destruction of Egypt is predicted, they seem to have been entitled Lamentations merely from the mournful nature of the subject; for they contain nothing of the elegiac form or style, scarcely any sentiment expressive of sorrow, and seem altogether composed for the denunciation of vengeance, and the exciting of

² EZEK. xxvii. and xxviii. 12—19.

³ EZEK. xxxii.

terror.

terror. Two other Lamentations⁴, the one over the princes of Judah, and the other over Jerusalem, may be explained upon similar principles: they are indeed poetical parables, and have been already noticed in their proper place.

There are also many passages in that most admirable poem, which bears the name of Job⁵, deserving to be accounted legitimate elegies: and indeed I do not know any more perfect specimens of this species of composition; so completely are the inmost recesses of sorrow displayed, and the remotest fountains of pity explored and laid open. But since these are parts of an entire poem, they are not rashly to be detached from the body of the work; and since the elegant disposition, and the extraordinary beauties of this inimitable composition, will deserve a fuller examination, it is sufficient in this place to have mentioned these passages as exquisite treasures, which the Muse of Sorrow might legally claim as her own, were she disposed to assert her rigid rights.

⁴ EZEK. xix.

⁵ See JOB, chap. iii. vi. vii. x. xiv. xvii. xix. xxix. xxx.

I proceed, therefore, to the book of Psalms, which is a collection, under the general title of hymns to the praise of God, containing poems of different kinds, and elegies among the rest. If indeed the contents of the book were methodically arranged in their proper classes, not less than a sixth or seventh part would appear to be elegiac. Since, however, this is a matter dependant in a great measure upon opinion, and not to be clearly demonstrated upon determinate principles; since the nature of the subject, the complexion of the style, or the general form and disposition of each poem, must decide the question; and since different persons will judge differently upon these points; it will hardly be expected that I should on this occasion proceed to the regular classification of them. It will indeed be more to your advantage, and more to our present purpose, to select an example which may be clearly demonstrated to belong to the elegiac class.

Under this appellation then I shall not hesitate to recommend to your notice the forty-second Psalm, since I cannot help esteeming it one of the most beautiful specimens of the Hebrew Elegy. The author of this elegant
com-

complaint, exiled from the temple, and from the public exercise of his religion, to the extreme parts of Judea, persecuted by his numerous enemies, and agitated by their reproaches, pours forth his soul to God in this tender and pathetic composition. The ardent feelings of a devout heart are admirably expressed, while the memory of former felicity seems to aggravate his present anguish. The extreme anxiety of a mind, depressed by the burthen of sorrow, and yet at the same time impatient under it; overcome by an accumulation of evils, yet in some degree endeavouring to resist them, and admitting, through the dark cloud of affliction, a glimmering ray of hope and consolation, is finely depicted. In frequent and almost instantaneous transitions he glows with love, and droops with lamentation; he complains, he expostulates; he despairs, and yet hopes; he is afflicted, and again consoled. It is not to be expected that any poetical version should express these sentiments with the force, the energy, and more particularly with the conciseness of the Hebrew, which is indeed not to be imitated in any other language: though it must be confessed, that

this poem is more diffuse than the Hebrew poetry in general. The following paraphrase however, though infinitely short of the original in sublimity, will perhaps serve to evince the correspondence of the subject and sentiments of this poem, with the elegiac productions of modern times :

As pants the wearied hart for cooling springs,
That sinks exhausted in the summer's chase ;
So pants my soul for thee, Great King of kings !
So thirsts to reach thy sacred resting-place.

On briny tears ⁶ my famish'd soul has fed,
While taunting foes deride my deep despair ;
" Say, where is now thy great Deliverer fled ?
" Thy mighty God — Deserted wanderer,
" where ?"

Oft dwell my thoughts on those thrice happy days,
When to thy fane I led the jocund throng ;
Our mirth was worship, all our pleasure praise,
And festal joys still clos'd with sacred song.

⁶ It seems odd to an English reader to represent *tears* as *meat* or *food* ; but we should remember, that the sustenance of the ancient Hebrews consisted for the most part of liquids, such as *broths*, *pottages*, &c. S. H.

Why

Why throb my heart? Why sink my sad'ning
soul?

Why droop to earth with various woes op-
press'd?

My years shall yet in blissful circles roll,
And joy be yet an inmate of this breast.

By Jordan's banks with devious steps I stray,
O'er Hermon's rugged rocks, and deserts
dear:

Ev'n there thy hand shall guide my lonely way,
There, thy remembrance shall my spirit cheer.

In rapid floods the vernal torrents roll,
Harsh-sounding cataracts responsive roar;
Thine angry billows overwhelm my soul,
And dash my shatter'd bark from shore to shore.

Yet thy soft mercies, ever in my sight,
My heart shall gladden through the tedious
day;
And midst the dark and gloomy shades of night,
To thee I'll fondly tune the grateful lay.

Rock of my hope! Great solace of my heart!
Why, why desert the offspring of thy care,
While taunting foes thus point th' invidious dart?
"Where's now thy God! abandon'd wanderer,
"where?"

Why faint my soul? why doubt JEHOVAH's aid?

Thy God, the God of mercy still shall prove!

In his bright fane thy thanks shall yet be paid;

Unquestion'd be his pity and his love⁷!

Another

⁷ This poem seems to have been composed by David, when he was expelled his kingdom by his rebellious son, and compelled to fly to the borders of Lebanon, as it is plain he did, from 2 SAM. xvii. 24, 26, 27. Undoubtedly, whoever composed this Psalm was expelled from the sacred city, and wandered as an exile in the regions of Hermon, and the heights of Lebanon, whence Jordan is fed by the melting of the perpetual snow, Ver. 7. let it be remembered, by the way, that David never betook himself to these places when he fled from Saul, but concealed himself in the interior parts of Judea. Here then he pitched his camp, protected by the surrounding mountains and woods; and hither the veteran soldiers, attached personally to him, and averse to change, resorted from every part of Palestine. Here also, indulging his melancholy, the prospect and the objects about him, suggested many of the ideas in this poem. Observing the deer which constantly came from the distant vallies to the fountains of Lebanon, and comparing this circumstance with his earnest desire to revisit the temple of God, and perhaps elevating his thoughts to a higher, celestial temple, he commences his poem:

“ As the hart panteth after the water brooks,

“ So panteth my soul after thee, O God.

“ My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God;

“ When shall I enter, and appear before God?”

That

Another point, to which I would wish every person who reads this Psalm in the original to advert, is the division of the periods, and the resolution of them into their constituent

That is, *enter into the temple*, from which I am now an exile. He adds a bitterer cause of grief than his exile, namely, the reproaches of the multitude, and the cruel taunt, that he is *deserted of his God*, and that the Deity, of whom he had boasted, fails to appear to his assistance, than which nothing can be more grating to an honest mind, and a mind conscious of its own piety. Compare 2 SAM. xvi. 7, 8,

“ My tears have been my sustenance,
 “ By day and by night,
 “ While they continually say unto me,
 “ Where is now thy God?”

The repetition of the name of God raises in him fresh uneasiness, and causes all his wounds to bleed again: this forces him to exclaim: “ I remember *God*, and I dissolve “ in tears.” For so the word *אלה* ought to be translated, and not according to the Masoretic punctuation, “ I remember *these things* :” since an obscurity arises from this punctuation, and it is difficult to say what things are referred to.

“ I remember God, and pour out myself in tears :
 “ When I went with the multitude to the temple of God,
 “ With the voice of joy and gladness, with the multitude
 “ leaping for joy.”

tuent parts or members; he will find, I believe, that the periods spontaneously divide into verses of nearly equal length and measure, exactly similar to those of the four first chapters of the Lamentations of Jeremiah; such as I before remarked appeared to constitute the established metre of the Hebrew Elegy. The whole of the nineteenth Psalm consists also of the same kind of verse, except the Epode, which contains two long verses of the same kind, and one shorter, which last is once repeated. The forty-third

He now restrains his tears:

“ Why art thou so cast down, O my soul?

“ And why art thou so disquieted within me?

“ Hope thou in God, for I still shall praise him.”

He again breaks forth into lamentations, with which he elegantly intermingles a poetical description of Lebanon. There are upon those hills frequent cataracts, and, in the spring season, the rivulets are uncommonly turbid by the melting of the snow:

“ Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy cataracts;

“ And all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.”

These form the principal imagery of the poem, and I omit the rest, lest I should fatigue the reader by the minuteness of criticism, which is both useless and impertinent, when the subject wants no illustration. M.

Psalm

Pſalm too ſeems to be conſtructed upon ſimilar principles, containing eight of the ſame kind of verſes, with the ſame Epode. And ſince it is written in the ſame train of ſentiment, the ſame ſtyle, and even apparently in the ſame metre, it ought not perhaps to be ſeparated from the preceding Pſalm^s, but rather to be conſidered as a part or continuation of the ſame compoſition: if this be true, the whole poem conſiſts of three parts almoſt equal and alike, each of which is concluded by the ſame intercalary period or ſtanza.

* I find EUSEBIUS was formerly of the ſame opinion.
 “ This Pſalm is without a title in the original, and con-
 “ ſequently in all the old tranſlations: there is indeed
 “ great reaſon, from the ſimilarity of thought and expreſ-
 “ ſion in both the Pſalms, to believe that it originally
 “ made a part of the Pſalm preceding.” In Ps. xliii.
 This conjecture receives further confirmation from the manuſcripts. “ The xliid and xliiid Pſalms are united toge-
 “ ther in twenty-two MSS. The Pſalms, however, are
 “ diſtinguiſhed from each other in the MSS. rarely by
 “ the numeral letters, but chiefly by theſe two methods:
 “ either by a ſingle word placed in the vacant ſpace be-
 “ tween them, which is uſually the breadth of one line:
 “ and this word is commonly the laſt word of the pre-
 “ ceding, or the initial word of the ſucceeding Pſalm; or
 “ elſe by the firſt word of each Pſalm being tranſcribed in
 “ letters of a larger ſize.” K. *Author's Note.*

There is another most beautiful poem of the elegiac kind, which on this occasion solicits our attention, I mean the Lamentation of David for Saul and Jonathan⁹; which appears to have been extracted by the historian from some poetical book, no longer extant, entitled *Jasher*¹⁰. It will not, I flatter myself,

⁹ 2 SAM. i. 17—27.

¹⁰ Since so many conjectures have been published concerning the book of *Jasher* and its title, without coming to any certain decision, I will also, without further apology, venture to give my sentiments upon it. The book of *Jasher* is twice quoted, first in JOSH. x. 13. where the quotation is evidently poetical, and forms exactly three distichs :

“ Sun stand thou still upon Gibeon,
 “ And thou Moon, in the valley of Ajalon :
 “ And the Sun stood still, and the Moon stayed her course,
 “ Until the people were avenged of their enemies.
 “ And the Sun tarried in the midst of the heavens,
 “ And hastened not to go down in a whole day.”

And afterwards in the passage referred to in the text, we find the above lamentation of David extracted from it. The custom of the Hebrews giving titles to their books from the initial word is well known, as Genesis is called *Beresbit*, &c. they also sometimes named the book, from some remarkable word in the first sentence; thus the book of Numbers is sometimes called *Bemidbar*. We find also
 in

self, be thought unreasonable to request your attention, while I endeavour to investigate, with some degree of accuracy, the nature and composition of this poem.

in their writings, canticles which had been produced on important occasions, introduced by some form of this kind: *az jasbar* (*then sung*) or *ve-jasbar peloni*, &c. thus *az jasbir Mosheh*, "then sung Moses," EXOD. xv. 1. (the SAMAR. reads *jasher*) *ve-thasbar Deborah*, "and Deborah sang," JUD. v. 1. See also the same inscription of Ps. xviii. Thus I suppose the book of *Jasher* to have been some collection of sacred songs, composed at different times and on different occasions, and to have had this title, because the book itself and most of the songs began in general with this word: *ve-jasbar*. And the old SYRIAC translator was certainly of this opinion, when in these places he substituted the word *asbir* (he sung); the meaning of which, says the ARABIC commentator, is *A book of songs*; in another place he himself explains it by a word expressive of *Hymns*. I, however, agree in opinion with those, who suppose this Lamentation originally to have borne the title of *Keshet* (a bow) either in memory of the slaughter made by the archers of the enemy, or from the *bow* of Jonathan, of which particular mention is made ver. 22. The LXX seem to have favoured this opinion.

"KOSH or rather *kos*, signifies in Arabic *to measure*, as "is remarked by the learned Michaelis: but I do not remember an instance of this word being used to signify "poetic measure (or metre)." H. *Author's Note.*

The

The Poet treats, though in no common manner, two common topics, and those the best adapted to the genuine Elegy; that I mean, which was employed in the celebration of the funeral rites; he expresses his own sorrow; and he celebrates the praises of the deceased. Both sentiments are displayed in the exordium; but, as might naturally be expected, sorrow is predominant, and bursts forth with the impetuosity of exclamation:

"The glory of Israel is slain on the high-places:
"How are the mighty fallen!"

Grief is of a timid and suspicious temper; and always ready at inventing causes for self-torment; easily offended by neglect, and utterly impatient of ridicule or contempt:

"They heard that I sighed, for there was none to
"comfort me:

"All mine enemies have heard of my calamity,
"and rejoiced that thou inflictedst it."

So Jerusalem complains in Jeremiah, exaggerating in the strongest terms her own mis-

"LAM. i. 21.

fortunes.

fortunes. Our Poet feels and expresses himself in almost the same manner :

“ Declare it not in Gath,
 “ Publish it not in the streets of Ascalon ;
 “ Left the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
 “ Left the daughters of the uncircumcised
 “ triumph.”

The same passion is also fullen and querulous, wayward and peevish, unable to restrain its impatience, and firing at every thing that opposes it. “ Would! ne’er that in the Pelian “ grove”—says one of the characters in the Medea of Ennius¹². On another occasion we find a person inveighing against the innocent mountain :

“ Alas! Betrayer, barren and accurst!
 “ What men, what heroes hast thou not de-
 “ stroy’d?
 “ Fatal alone to those, whose patriot worth
 “ Their noble birth by noblest acts proclaim’d¹³.”

¹² CICERO. De Fato. See EURIPIDES, Medea, ver. 1.

¹³ Scolion apud ATHENÆUM, lib. xv. See EUSTATHIUS ad Iliad A. 171. Edit. ALEX. POLITI *Florentiæ*, and HERODOT. Terpsichor, 63, 64.

Our Poet is not more temperate :

“ O mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew
“ nor rain upon you !”

If these passages were brought before the severe tribunal of reason, nothing could appear more absurd ; but if examined by the criterion of the passions, nothing can be more consonant to nature, more beautiful or emphatic. Not to refer effects to their real causes is in logic an imperfection, but in poetry often a beauty ; the appeal in the one case is to reason, in the other to the passions. When sorrow has had sufficient vent, there is leisure to expatiate on the accomplishments of the dead. In the first place they are celebrated for their virtue and heroic actions ; next for their piety and mutual affection ; and lastly for their agility and strength. Saul is honoured with a particular panegyric, because he had enriched his people, and contributed to the general felicity and splendour of the state. This passage, by the way, is most exquisite composition ; the women of Israel are most happily introduced, and the subject of the encomium

comium is admirably adapted to the female characters ¹⁴. Jonathan is at last celebrated in a distinct eulogium, which is beautifully pathetic, is animated with all the fervour, and sweetened with all the tenderness of friendship.

¹⁴ “Ye daughters of Israel weep over Saul,” &c.

The following passage bears no remote resemblance to this of the sacred writer, and I think comes nearer it in sublimity than any thing I have observed in modern poetry:

“Ye, who erewhile for Cook’s illustrious brow
 “Pluck’d the green laurel, and the oaken bough;
 “Hung the gay garlands on the trophied oars,
 “And pour’d his fame along a thousand shores,
 “Strike the slow death-bell!—weave the sacred verse,
 “And strew the cypress o’er his honour’d hearse.”

Miss SEWARD’S *Elegy on Captain Cook*.

A nice ear will discern something peculiar in the structure of the *third* and *fifth* lines of this quotation. Each of these lines, in fact, begins with a Trochaic, followed by Spondees, which, from its abruptness and energy, is admirably adapted to the expression of sorrow:

Hung the gay garlands, &c.
 Strike the slow death-bell, &c.

In this short Elegy specimens may be found of almost every poetical beauty and excellence. T.

I should have made some particular observations on the intercalary period or Epode inserted in the Psalm which was lately under our consideration, but that I was aware an opportunity would again present itself during the examination of this poem. This recurrence of the same idea is perfectly congenial to the nature of Elegy; since grief is fond of dwelling upon the particular objects of the passion, and frequently repeating them. There is something singular, however, in the intercalary period which occurs in this poem, for it does not regularly assume the same form of words, as is the case in general, but appears with a little variation. It is three times introduced, beautifully diversified in the order and diction: it forms part of the exordium, as well as of the conclusion, and is once inserted in the body of the poem.

Another observation, though it merit no higher title than a conjecture, I do not hesitate to submit to your consideration. There appears to be something singular in the versification of this Elegy, and a very free use of different metres. It neither consists altogether of the long verses, nor yet of the short ones (which are the most usual in the poetry

poetry of the Hebrews); but rather of a very artful and happy mixture of both, so that the concise and pointed parallelism serves to correct the languour and diffuseness of the elegiac verse: and this form of versification takes place also in some of the Psalms. Certainly there is a great appearance of art and design in this nice and poetical conformation of the periods: and that no grace or elegance should be wanting to this poem, it is no less remarkable for the general beauty, splendour, and perspicuity of the style.

To do complete justice to the economy of this excellent production, it is absolutely necessary to exhibit it in an entire state. Not to tire you therefore with a repetition of the verbal translation, I have endeavoured to express the general sentiments and imagery in elegiac numbers.

Thy glory, Israel, droops its languid head,
On Gilboa's heights thy rising beauty dies;
In sordid piles there sleep th' illustrious dead,
The mighty victor fall'n and vanquish'd lies.

Yet

Yet dumb be Grief—Hush'd be her clam'rous
voice!

Tell not in Gath the tidings of our shame!
Lest proud Philistia in our woes rejoice,
And rude barbarians blast fair Israel's fame.

No more, O Gilboa! heaven's reviving dew
With rising verdure crown thy fated head!
No victim's blood thine altars dire imbrue!
For there the blood of heaven's elect was shed.

The sword of Saul ne'er spent its force in air;
The shaft of Jonathan brought low the brave;
In life united equal fates they share,
In death united share one common grave.

Swift as the eagle cleaves the aerial way,
Through hosts of foes they bent their rapid
course;
Strong as the lion darts upon his prey,
They crush'd the nations with resistless force.

Daughters of Judah mourn the fatal day,
In sable grief attend your monarch's urn;
To solemn notes attune the pensive lay,
And weep those joys that never shall return:

With various wealth he made your tents o'erflow,
In princely pride your charms profusely dress'd;
Bade the rich robe with ardent purple glow,
And sparkling gems adorn the tissu'd vest.

On

On Gilboa's heights the mighty vanquish'd lies,
The son of Saul, the generous and the just;
Let streaming sorrows ever fill these eyes,
Let sacred tears bedew a brother's dust!

Thy firm regard rever'd thy David's name,
And kindest thoughts in kindest acts express'd;
Not brighter glows the pure and generous flame,
That lives within the tender virgin's breast.

But vain the tear, and vain the bursting sigh,
Though Sion's echoes with our griefs resound;
The mighty victors fall'n and vanquish'd lie,
And war's refulgent weapons strew the ground.

OF DIDACTIC POETRY.

LECTURE XXIV.

OF THE PROVERBS, OR DIDACTIC POETRY
OF THE HEBREWS.

The ancient mode of instructing by Parables or Proverbs.—The Proverbs of Solomon: that work consists of two parts; the first, which extends to the ninth chapter inclusive, truly poetical, and most elegant in its kind: the remainder of the book consists of detached maxims.—The principal characteristics of a Parable or Proverb; brevity (which naturally involves in it some degree of obscurity) and elegance.—Ecclesiastes: the argument, disposition, and style of that work.—All the alphabetical Psalms of this kind, as well as some others.—The wisdom of the son of Sirach, written originally in Hebrew, in imitation of the Proverbs of Solomon.—The fidelity of the Greek translator; and the great elegance of the work in general.—The wisdom of Solomon, written originally in Greek, and in imitation of the Proverbs; the style and economy of that book.—A new translation of the xxivth chapter of Ecclesiasticus.

IN those periods of remote antiquity, which may with the utmost propriety be styled the infancy of societies and nations, the usual, if not the only, mode of instruction was by detached aphorisms or proverbs. Human wisdom was then indeed in a rude
and

and unfinished state; it was not digested, methodized, or reduced to order and connexion. Those, who, by genius and reflexion, exercised in the school of experience, had accumulated a stock of knowledge, were desirous of reducing it into the most compendious form, and comprized in a few maxims those observations which they apprehended most essential to human happiness. This mode of instruction was, in truth, more likely than any other to prove efficacious with men in a rude stage of society; for it professed not to dispute, but to command; not to persuade, but to compel; it conducted them not by a circuit of argument, but led immediately to the approbation and practice of integrity and virtue. That it might not, however, be altogether destitute of allurements, and lest it should disgust by an appearance of roughness and severity, some degree of ornament became necessary; and the instructors of mankind added to their precepts the graces of harmony, and illuminated them with metaphors, comparisons, allusions, and the other embellishments of style. This manner, which with other nations prevailed only during the first periods

of civilization, with the Hebrews continued to be a favourite style to the latest ages of their literature. It obtained among them the appellation of *Mashalim* (or Parables) as well because it consisted in a great measure of Parables strictly so called; as because it possessed uncommon force and authority over the minds of the auditors.

Of this Didactic Poetry there are still extant many specimens in the writings of the Hebrews; and among these the first rank must be assigned to the Proverbs of Solomon. This work consists of two parts. The first, serving as a proem or exordium, includes the nine first chapters; and is varied, elegant, sublime, and truly poetical; the order of the subject is in general excellently preserved, and the parts are very aptly connected among themselves. It is embellished with many beautiful descriptions and personifications; the diction is polished, and abounds with all the ornaments of poetry; insomuch, that it scarcely yields in elegance and splendour to any of the sacred writings. The other part, which extends from the beginning of the tenth chapter to the end of the book, consists almost entirely of detached parables

parables or maxims, which have but little in them of the sublime or poetical, except a certain energetic and concise turn of expression. Since the Didactic Poetry of the Hebrews assumes in general this unconnected and sententious form, and since this style intrudes itself into almost all the poetry of the Hebrews, and occurs frequently in poems of a character very different from the Didactic; I shall treat principally of this latter part of the book of Proverbs, and endeavour more minutely to investigate the precise nature of a parable or proverb.

Solomon himself, in one of his proverbs, has explained the principal excellencies of this form of composition; exhibiting at once a complete definition of a parable or proverb, and a very happy specimen of what he describes:

“ Apples of gold in a net-work of silver

“ Is a word seasonably spoken¹.”

Thus he insinuates, that grave and profound sentiments are to be set off by a smooth and well-turned phraseology, as the appearance

¹ PROV. XXV. II.

of the most beautiful and exquisitely-coloured fruit, or the imitation of it perhaps in the most precious materials, is improved by the circumstance of shining, as through a veil, through the reticulations of a silver vessel exquisitely carved. Nay, he further intimates, that it is not only a neat turn and polished diction which must recommend them, but that truth itself acquires additional beauty, when partially discovered through the veil of elegant fiction and imagery.

To consider the subject in a still more particular point of view, let brevity be admitted as the prime excellence of a proverb². This is, indeed, a necessary condition, without which it can neither retain the name nor the nature. For if the sentiment be diffusely expressed, if even when it contains a double image, it exceed ten or at most twelve

² “The brevity of this kind of composition, and the
“condensing of much thought into a small compass,
“renders it more sententious, more sage and expressive.
“As in a small seed, the whole power of vegetation,
“which is to produce a tree, is contained. And if any
“writer should amplify the sentence, it would be no
“longer a proverb, but a declamation.” DEMET.
PHAL. *Περὶ Ἑρμηνείας*. Sect. ix.

words,

words, it is no longer a proverb but an harangue. For the discriminating sentiment must force itself on the mind by a single effort, and not by a tedious process; the language must be strong and condensed, rather omitting some circumstances that appear necessary, than admitting any thing superfluous. Horace himself insists upon this as one of the express rules of Didactic Poetry, and he has assigned the reason on which it is founded:

“ Short be the precept, which with ease is gain’d
 “ By docile minds, and faithfully retain’d³.”

Solomon expresses the same sentiment in his own (that is the parabolic) manner:

“ The words of the wise are like goads,
 “ And like nails that are firmly fixed⁴.”

That

³ Francis’s Horace Art of Poetry, ver. 455.

⁴ ECCLES. xii. 11. This I think is one of the *geminæ* proverbs (or those which “contain a double image,” as mentioned before) and requires a different mode of interpretation for the two images, as having nothing coalescent in their natures.—It is the property of a proverb to *prick sharply*, and *hold firmly*. The first idea is included in the image of a goad—the latter in the nail *deeply*, and therefore, *firmly* driven. S. H.

That is, they instantaneously stimulate or affect the mind; they penetrate deeply, and are firmly retained.

Some degree of obscurity is generally an attendant upon excessive brevity; and the parabolic style is so far from being abhorrent of this quality, that it seems frequently to affect it, and to regard it as a perfection. This obscurity is not indeed altogether without its uses: it whets the understanding, excites an appetite for knowledge, keeps alive the attention, and exercises the genius by the labour of the investigation. The human mind, moreover, is ambitious of having a share in the discovery of truth; excessive indolence or dulness only requires a very open and minute display, or prefers a passive inert-

In Palestine, it formerly made an essential part of the building of a house, to furnish the inside of the several apartments with sets of spikes, nails, or large pegs, upon which to dispose of, and hang up, the several moveables in common use, and proper to the apartment. These spikes they worked into the walls at the first erection of them; the walls being of such materials, that they could not bear their being driven in afterwards; and they were contrived so as to strengthen the walls by binding the parts together, as well as to serve for convenience. See Bishop LOWTH's *Isaiah*, p. 128. T.

ness

ness to the exercise and the praise of perspicacity and discernment; and that knowledge is ever most delightful, which we have compassed by our own efforts⁵. Other causes, however, independent of the brevity and conciseness of the language, have, in many cases, contributed to the obscurity of the parabolic style⁶. In the first place, some degree of obscurity necessarily attends those passages in

⁵ So great a portion of human happiness consists in activity and employment, that without at all resorting to the love of fame, we need not wonder that some degree of difficulty interests and engages the mind, and merely by exciting the faculties to action affords positive pleasure. T.

—————“ Pater ipse colendi
 “ Haud facilem esse viam voluit, primusque per artem
 “ Movit agros, *curis acuens mortalia corda* :
 “ Nec torpere gravi passus sua regna veterno.”
 “ Whetting with many a care the human heart.”
 S. H.

⁶ The *brevity* of the ancient proverbs may, in a great measure, be accounted for, from the want of alphabetical writing, and their being intended to be committed to memory. Much of their *obscurity* may be attributed to our ignorance of many local circumstances to which they allude, and which actually served to assist the memories of those for whom they were designed. T.

which

which different objects are applied in succession to the illustration of each other, without any express marks of comparison: of this we have had an example in the parable just now quoted, and of this there are many other examples in the sacred writings. I will, nevertheless, select one or two, which are deserving of our attention for their peculiar propriety and elegance:

“ Clouds and wind without rain,
“ Is a man who glories in a fallacious gift ⁷.”

The following is in a different form:

“ Gold, and abundance of rubies,
“ And precious ornaments, are the lips of know-
“ ledge ⁸.”

Again, obscurity is almost inevitable, when the subject itself, to which the imagery appertains and alludes, is removed out of sight, and the sentiment assumes the form of allegory. Horace expresses a very common precept in plain language:

⁷ PROV. XXV. 14.

⁸ PROV. XX. 15.

“ Learn

“ Learn the strong sense of pleasure to controul;
“ With virtuous pride its blandishments disdain:
“ Hurtful is pleasure, when 'tis bought with
“ pain?”

But with how much more elegance does Solomon deliver the same precept in a figurative manner, and under the veil of allegory!

“ Hast thou found honey? Eat no more than
“ may suffice thee:
“ Lest thou be satiated, and nauseate it ¹⁰.”

Some obscurity also attends any comparison which is of extensive application: of this the following seems a pertinent example:

“ As in water face (answers) to face,
“ So doth the heart of man to man ¹¹.”

This is certainly very difficult to apply or to define, since it may refer in many different views to the faculties, genius, affections, will, attachments, manners, virtues, and vices of men, among which there generally subsists a certain agreement or similitude from imitation, and from habits which are in-

⁹ Francis's Horace, B. I. Ep. ii. ver. 78.

¹⁰ PROV. xxv. 16.

¹¹ PROV. xxvii. 19.

sibly caught in social intercourse. Lastly, not to dwell too long upon this subject, some obscurity succeeds, when the principal, or perhaps the whole force of a proverb or parable, does not lie in the direct and literal sense, but in something not immediately expressed, which is however concomitant with it :

“ The hearing ear, and the seeing eye,

“ JEHOVAH made them both ¹².”

To dwell upon the external and literal sense of this proverb, will only bewilder the reader in the dubious turn of the expression ; but how sublime, how profitable, is the sentiment, when it comes from the pen of the Psalmist, embellished with his usual perspicuity and animation ?

“ He who planted the ear, shall he not hear ?

“ He who formed the eye, shall he not see ¹³ ?”

The last quality that I shall mention as essential to a parable or proverb, is elegance ; which is not inconsistent with brevity, or indeed with some degree of obscurity. I speak of elegance as it respects the sentiment, the

¹² PROV. XX. 12.

¹³ PSAL. xciv. 9.

imagery,

imagery, and the diction, and of its union with all these we have already had sufficient proof in all the parables which have been quoted in the course of this Lecture. It may however be proper to remark in this place, that even those proverbs, which are the plainest, most obvious, and simple, which contain nothing remarkable either in sentiment or style, are not to be esteemed without their peculiar elegance, if they possess only brevity, and that neat, compact form, and roundness of period, which alone are sufficient to constitute a parable. Such is the maxim, quoted by David in the Sacred History, as an ancient proverb;

“ Wickedness will proceed from the wicked ¹⁴.”

Such is that of Solomon,

“ Hate stirreth up strifes;

“ But love covereth all transgressions ¹⁵.”

And many others which might easily be produced from the same author.

There is another Didactic work of Solomon, entitled *Kobelet*, (Ecclesiastes) or the

¹⁴ 1 SAM. xxiv. 13.

¹⁵ PROV. x. 12.

Preacher;

Preacher; or rather perhaps Wisdom the Preacher, the general tenour and style of which is very different from the book of Proverbs, though there are many detached sentiments and proverbs interspersed. For the whole work is uniform, and confined to one subject, namely, the vanity of the world exemplified by the experience of Solomon, who is introduced in the character of a person investigating a very difficult question, examining the arguments on either side, and at length disengaging himself from an anxious and doubtful disputation. It would be very difficult to distinguish the parts and arrangement of this production; the order of the subject and the connexion of the arguments are involved in so much obscurity, that scarcely any two commentators have agreed concerning the plan of the work, and the accurate division of it into parts or sections. The truth is, the laws of methodical composition and arrangement were neither known by the Hebrews, nor regarded in their Didactic writings. They uniformly retained the old sententious manner, nor did they submit to method, even where the occasion appeared to demand it. The style of this
work

work is, however, singular; the language is generally low, I might almost call it mean or vulgar; it is frequently loose, unconnected, approaching to the incorrectness of conversation; and possesses very little of the poetical character, even in the composition and structure of the periods: which peculiarity may possibly be accounted for from the nature of the subject. Contrary to the opinion of the Rabbies, Ecclesiastes has been classed among the poetical books; though if their authority and opinions were of any weight or importance, they might, perhaps, on this occasion, deserve some attention¹⁶.

Some of the Psalms also belong properly to this class; the alphabetical, for instance, with some others. The alphabetical or acrostic form of composition has been more than once alluded to in the course of these Lectures. The chief commendation of these

¹⁶ It is the opinion of a very ingenious writer, in a learned work, which he has lately produced, that the greater part of this book was written in prose, but that it contains many scraps of poetry, introduced as occasion served: and to this opinion I am inclined to assent. See A. V. DESVOEUX *Tent. Phil. & Crit. in Eccles.* lib. ii. cap. i. *Author's Note.*

poems is, that they are excellently accommodated to ordinary use; that the sentiments are serious, devout, and practical; the language chaste and perspicuous; the composition neat, and regularly adapted to the sententious form.

There are extant, besides these, two other considerable works of the Didactic kind, which the Hebrew poetry may legally claim, though they are only extant in Greek prose. I mean The Wisdom of the Son of Sirach, and that which is entitled The Wisdom of Solomon.

The work of the Son of Sirach, translated from the Hebrew into Greek, by one of the descendants of the author, is altogether of the same kind with the Proverbs of Solomon; insomuch, that it originally bore the same title (*Masbalim*) as we learn from Jerome, who directly asserts, that he had seen the book in Hebrew¹⁷; and I see no reason why his assertion should not relate to the original Hebrew copy, rather than to any Syriac version. However this may be, it is clear even from the Greek

¹⁷ Præf. in Libros Salomonis.

translation,

translation, which we have, that the book in every respect resembles the Proverbs of Solomon, as nearly as an imitation can resemble an original. There is a great similarity in the matter, the sentiments, and the diction; the complexion of the style, and the construction of the periods, are quite the same; so that I cannot entertain a doubt, that the author actually adopted the same mode of versification, whatever it was, if we can admit that any knowledge of the Hebrew metres was extant at the time when he is supposed to have written. For all that we are able to conjecture on this head we are indebted to the great fidelity of the translator, which is abundantly manifested in every part of the work. He seems indeed not at all to have affected the elegancies of the Greek language, but to have performed his duty with the most religious regard to the Hebrew idiom; he not only exhibits faithfully the sentiments, but seems even to have numbered the words, and exactly to have preserved their order; so that, were it literally and accurately to be re-translated, I have very little doubt that, for the most part, the original diction would be recovered.

If any person will make the experiment on a small scale, he will readily discern the perfect coincidence of this composition with the most ancient specimens of the Didactic Poetry of the Hebrews; so exact indeed is the agreement both in form and character, that the reader might, without much difficulty, be persuaded, that he was perusing the compositions of another Solomon. This author is however an imitator chiefly of the former part of the book of Proverbs: for there is more connexion and order in the sentiments; the style is also more highly coloured, and abounds more in imagery and figures than the Didactic Poetry of the Hebrews in general requires. As an instance, I need only mention that admirable personification of Wisdom exhibited by him, in which he has so happily adopted the manner of his great predecessor ¹⁸.

The Wisdom of Solomon is also composed in imitation of that prince of didactic writers, but with a degree of success very unequal indeed to that of the Son of Sirach. It is not, like the book which bears his name,

¹⁸ ECCLUS. xxiv.

a translation from the Hebrew, but is evidently the performance of some Hellenistic Jew, and originally written in Greek. The style is very unequal; it is often pompous and turgid, as well as tedious and diffuse, and abounds in epithets, directly contrary to the practice of the Hebrews; it is however sometimes temperate, poetical and sublime. The construction is occasionally sententious, and tolerably accurate in that respect, so as to discover very plainly that the author had the old Hebrew poetry for his model, though he fell far short of its beauty and sublimity. The economy of the work is still more faulty; he continues the prayers of Solomon from the ninth chapter to the very end of the book; and they consequently take up more than one-half of the whole. But beside the tediousness of such an harangue, he indulges in too great a subtilty of disquisition upon abstruse subjects, and mingles many things very foreign to the nature of an address to the Deity: and after all, the subject itself is brought to no perfect conclusion. On these accounts I agree with those critics, who suppose this book to be a much more modern production than that of the

Son of Sirach, and to have been composed in a less enlightened age.

That I may not dismiss the subject without exhibiting a specimen of some complete poem of the kind, such as I have hitherto given, I shall add to this Lecture a translation of a part of Ecclesiasticus, namely, that elegant personification of Wisdom I lately mentioned; in which I have endeavoured as much as possible to preserve, or rather restore, the form and character of the original Hebrew ¹⁹.

THE

¹⁹ Our author's observations on the nature and origin of Didactic Poetry are most strikingly just: and on inspecting the early Didactic productions of the Greeks, the old sententious form may be easily discovered: indeed, that pointed and antithetic manner seems (probably by the force of habit and imitation) to have pervaded this kind of poetry, both ancient and modern. To our author's excellent remarks on the subject, I will add, that the science of morals appears to be the only branch of discipline which can be successfully treated of in verse. The study of abstract science demands a disposition of mind very different from that which enjoys the playfulness of fancy. In such Didactic Poetry, therefore, as professes to treat of any subject but morals, the mind is either too much warmed by the language, imagery, and episodes, to think of the main drift of the author, and then he is not understood,

as

THE TWENTY-FOURTH CHAPTER OF
ECCLESIASTICUS.

- " Wisdom shall praise her own spirit,
 " And shall glory in the midst of her people :
 " In the congregation of the Most High shall she
 " open her mouth,
 " And in the presence of his power shall she
 " glory.
 " I proceeded out of the mouth of the Most
 " High;
 " And as a mist I covered the earth.
 " I dwelt

as, I believe, is generally found to be the case in reading Dr. AKENSIDE's *Pleasures of the Imagination*; or else the attention is fixed upon the matter, and then the poetical style is an unnecessary and meretricious ornament, which only perplexes the mind, by diverting it from its object. The reason why ethics may be safely taught in verse, seems to be, because that science is conversant chiefly with the human passions, and the delineation of them; and poetry being no other than the language of passion, will, on such a subject, rather illustrate than confuse. I may add too, that ethics is a science with which mankind are most generally acquainted, and therefore can most easily comprehend. I am aware, that on this argument the success and popularity of some Didactic Poems will be alledged against me, and particularly that of the *Georgics*, *Lucretius*, and *Horace's Epistle to the Pisos*; but I must

N 3

remark,

- " I dwelt above on high,
 " And my throne was in the pillar of a cloud.
 " I compassed the circuit of the heavens alone,
 " And walked in the depth of the abyfs.
 " In the waves of the fea, and in all the earth,
 " And in every people, and every nation I ob-
 " tained a poffeffion :
 " With all thefe I fought reft,
 " And in whose inheritance fhall I abide ?
 " Then the Creator of all things commanded me,
 " And he that created me fixed my tabernacle :
 " And faid, let thy dwelling be in Jacob,
 " And in Ifrael thine inheritance,
 " Before the world he created me, from the be-
 " ginning ;
 " And I fhall never ceafe.
 " In the tabernacle of holinefs I ferved before
 " him ;
 " And fo was I eftablifhed in Sion.
 " Thus in the beloved city he caufed me to reft,
 " And over Jerufalem was my power :

remark, that thefe very poems owe their whole fuccefs to
 the episodes and the moral sentiments with which they
 abound : and I appeal to any candid reader, whether, after
 all, he has not been at fome times fatigued with the Di-
 dactic parts of even thefe moft elegant productions. I
 do not indeed approve of long Didactic Poems, even
 upon moral fubjects ; for, unlefs they be enlivened by in-
 teresting episodes and defcriptions, they can fcarcely fail
 to appear tedious and dry. T.

" I took

- " I took root in an honourable people,
" In the portion of the inheritance of **JEHOVAH**.
" As a cedar in Lebanon was I exalted,
" And as a cypress on the mountains of Hermon.
" As a palm-tree in Gaddi was I exalted,
" And as plants of roses in Jericho:
" As a fair olive in a pleasant field,
" And as a plane-tree I was exalted above the
" waters;
" As cinnamon, and as a mass of ointment I
" yielded fragrance;
" And as choice myrrh I breathed forth a plea-
" sant odour,
" As galbanum, and onyx, and storax,
" And as the vapour of frankincense in the taber-
" nacle.
" I, as the turpentine-tree, sent out my branches,
" And my branches are the branches of glory
" and favour.
" I, as the vine, blossomed forth a pleasant
" smell,
" And my flowers are the embryoes of honour
" and wealth.
" Come unto me all ye that desire me,
" And with my productions be filled:
" For my remembrance is sweeter than honey,
" And my possession than the comb of the bees.
" They that eat me shall yet be hungry;
" And they that drink me shall yet be thirsty.

- " He that obeyeth me shall not be ashamed,
 " And those that act according to me shall not sin.
 " All these are in the book of the covenant of God
 " most high ;
 " The law which Moses commanded,
 " An inheritance for the generations of Jacob.
 " Wisdom filleth like Pishon,
 " And like Hiddékel in the month Abib.
 " She maketh the understanding to overflow like
 " Euphrates ;
 " And as Jordan in the days of harvest.
 " She sendeth forth instruction as the river²⁰,
 " And

²⁰ The grandson of Sirach appears in this place to have fallen into an error, and to have failed of expressing the sentiment of his ancestor : for finding the word imperfectly written in his copy he read it כנאר, and rashly translated it *ὡς φως* (as the light). Observe also the incongruity of this word with the context, according to the common reading : Pison, Tigris, Euphrates, Jordan, *the light*, Gihon : in the place of *the light*, some river must certainly be intended, and therefore we ought to read כנאר, *ὡς ὁ Νεῖλος*, *as the river*, that is, the Nile, so called for the sake of distinction : and doubtless to a Jew, who resided in its neighbourhood, and who was a spectator of its wonderful inundations, it would appear worthy of being ranked with the most noble rivers, and consequently worthy of this distinction. Moreover, JABLONSKIUS, *Pantheon Egypt*, lib. iv. cap. i. sect. 2. is of opinion, that the word נר chiefly refers to the Nile in the sacred writers ; and supposes נר, in the Egyptian JARO, to

- " And as Gihon in the days of the vintage.
 " The first man was not perfect in the knowledge
 " of her,
 " Neither shall the last search her out :
 " For her thoughts are more extensive than the
 " sea,
 " And her counsels than the vast abyss.
 " I came forth also as a brook from a river,
 " And as a stream in Paradise welled from its
 " fountain.
 " I said I will water my garden,
 " And I will abundantly water my furrow ;
 " And behold, my brook became a river,
 " And my river became a sea.
 " For I will beam forth instruction as the morn-
 " ing,
 " I will make it to shine afar off :

to have been the first and only name of the Nile among the Egyptians. This word, however, itself is defectively read נַחַל AMOS viii. 8. (" it is read נַחַל in four MSS." K.) but being repeated immediately, it is more fully expressed נַחַל, ix. 5. See CAPPELL *Crit. Sac.* iv. 2. 11. A learned friend of mine observed to me, that the great BOCHART had long since been of the same opinion, whose authority I am happy to adduce in favour of what I have here asserted: " נַחַל is a river, as well as נַחַל. So it occurs AMOS viii. 8. where it is spoken of the Nile, and " in the same sense it is used by the son of Sirach, Ecclus. xxiv. 27. where it has been hastily translated " the light." Chanaan, lib. i. chap. 23. *Author's Note.*

" For

" For I will pour out doctrine as prophecy,
 " And bequeath it to all generations for ever.
 " Behold I have not laboured for myself alone,
 " But for all who inquire after the truth ²¹."

²¹ The following translation of this admirable chapter into English verse was furnished me by an ingenious friend, and I dare believe will prove acceptable to the reader. T.

ECCLESIASTICUS—CHAP. XXIV.

Wisdom shall raise her loud exulting voice,
 And, 'midst her people, glory and rejoice;
 Oft the Almighty's awful presence near,
 Her dulcet sounds angelic choirs shall hear.—

Wak'd by the breath of heaven's high king to birth,
 I seem'd a cloud involving skies and earth;
 Aloft on places high, was my retreat,
 Dark mists encircled my exalted seat;
 Round the broad sky I solitary roved,
 Or through the mazy depths of ocean moved,
 My paths amidst the swelling waves remain'd,
 Some power in every changing clime I gain'd;
 With each, with all, I anxious sought repose;
 But where, say where, shall Wisdom's wanderings close?
 Hark! did not he, who fram'd the worlds, command?
 Here shall thy much-lov'd tabernacle stand,
 Here on the plains of Jacob shalt thou live,
 Thy goodly heritage shall Israel give.—

Me, before time itself he gave to-day,
 Nor shall my spirit faint, or feel decay;
 I bow'd before him in his hallow'd shrine,
 And Sion's pride and Sion's strength was mine.
 Did I not tall as those fair cedars grow,
 Which grace our Lebanon's exalted brow?

Did

Did I not lofty as the cypress rise,
 Which seems from Hermon's heights to meet the skies?
 Fresh as Engaddi's palm that scents the air,
 Like rose of Jericho, so sweet, so fair;
 Green as the verdant olive of the groves,
 Straight as the plane-tree which the streamlet loves.
 Around soft cinnamon its odour spreads,
 Aspalathus perfumes our balmy meads;
 More grateful still does myrrh its fragrance yield,
 Sweet to the sense, the glory of the field;—
 In Salem's temple, at JEHOVAH's shrine,
 From frankincense ascends a fume divine;
 Yet did my breath more precious balms exhale,
 And charge with fragrance each auspicious gale.
 I the rich produce of the seasons bring,
 And grace and honour 'midst my foliage spring;
 Richer than vineyards rise my sacred bow'rs,
 Sweeter than roses bloom my vernal flowers;
 Fair love is mine, and hope, and gentle fear;
 Me Science hallows, as a parent dear.

Come, who aspire beneath my shade to live;
 Come, all my fragrance, all my fruits receive!
 Sweeter than honey are the strains I sing,
 Sweeter than honey-comb the dower I bring:
 Me, taste who will, shall feel increas'd desire,
 Who drinks shall still my flowing cups require;
 He whose firm heart my precepts still obeys,
 With safety walks thro' life's perplexing maze;
 Who cautious follows where my footsteps lead,
 No cares shall feel, no nightly terrors dread.

Heaven's book records my ever sacred lore,
 Deriv'd from HIM, whom earth and seas adore;

His wisdom guides this varying scene below,
(Clear as in spring the streams of Tigris flow)
His spirit fills with hope th' expanding soul;
Full as the waters of Euphrates roll,
Or as, when harvest swells the golden grain,
Impetuous Jordan rushes o'er the plain.—
From him the ray of holy science shines,
Bright as the sun maturing Geon's vines:—
Man breath'd at first unconscious of the power,
Nor knows heaven's wisdom at his latest hour.

Small was my stream, when first I roll'd along,
In clear meanders Eden's vales among;
With freshening draughts each tender plant I fed,
And bade each flow'ret raise its blushing head;
But soon my torrent o'er its margin rose,
Where late a brook, behold an ocean flows!
For Wisdom's blessings shall o'er earth extend,
Blessings that know no bound, that know no end—
Each selfish labour Wisdom shall disdain,
My fruit, my treasures, all who seek shall gain.

OF LYRIC POETRY.

LECTURE XXV.

OF THE HEBREW ODE IN GENERAL; AND
FIRST OF THAT CLASS, THE CHARAC-
TERISTICS OF WHICH ARE SWEETNESS
AND ELEGANCE.

*Lyric Poetry originated from the most jocund and pleasing af-
fections of the human mind.—The most ancient species of
poetry, and almost coeval with human nature itself.—Par-
ticularly cultivated by the Hebrews.—The manner, intro-
duced by David, of singing their odes highly magnificent.—
The general character of this species of poetry: its prin-
cipal distinctions.—The first character of the Ode, sweet-
ness.—What passions and affections it is intended to express:
examples from the Psalms.—The cxxxiiiid Psalm in Eng-
lish verse.*

THOSE compositions which were in-
tended for music, whether vocal alone,
or accompanied with instruments, obtained
among the Hebrews the appellation of *Shir*,
among the Greeks that of *Ode*; and both
these words have exactly the same power and
signification. The Hebrew word, as well as
the Greek, appears in course of time to have
I been

been appropriated to denote a particular form and species of poetry, with this difference however, that it is occasionally used with greater latitude.

The ode is in its nature sufficiently expressive of its origin. It was the offspring of the most vivid, and the most agreeable passions of the mind, of love, joy, and admiration. If we consider man on his first creation, such as the Sacred Writings represent him; in perfect possession of reason and speech; neither ignorant of his own nor of the divine nature, but fully conscious of the goodness, majesty, and power of God; not an unobservant spectator of the beautiful fabric of the universe; is it not probable, that on the contemplation of these objects, his heart would glow with gratitude and love? And is it not probable, that the effect of such an emotion would be an effusion of praise to his Great Creator, accompanied with a suitable energy and exaltation of voice? Such indeed were the sensations experienced by the author of that most beautiful Psalm, in which the whole creation is invited to celebrate the glory of the most high God:

“ Praise

“ Praise JEHOVAH from the heavens;
 “ Praise him in the heights:
 “ Praise him all his angels;
 “ Praise him all his hosts.”

This hymn is, therefore, most elegantly imitated, and put into the mouth of Adam by our countryman Milton[†], who is justly accounted the next in sublimity to those poets, who wrote under the influence of divine inspiration. Indeed we scarcely seem to conceive rightly of that original and perfect state of man, unless we assign him some of the aids of harmony and poetical expression, to enable him to testify in terms becoming the dignity of the subject, his devout affections towards his infinite Creator.

Without carrying our researches, however, to objects so remote from human information, if we appeal only to the common testimony of history, we shall find that, among every people not utterly barbarous, the use of music and poetry in the celebration of their religious mysteries, has prevailed from the first periods of society. Of all that sacred melody, which Plato informs us was sometimes established by the solemn

[†] Ps. cxlviii.

² *Parad. Lost*, lib. v.

sanction of legal authority³, he assigns the first rank to that which assumed the form of addresses to the Deity, and was distinguished by the appellation of Hymns. In all the Latin poetry, there is nothing that can boast equal antiquity with the Salian poems of Numa, composed by that wise and learned monarch on the first institution of his religious rites, and sung by the Salii, whom Dionysius styles "the chorus of the Gods of War⁴," with solemn dancing and other religious ceremonies. There is scarcely any necessity to mention, that the most ancient of all poems extant (those I mean of which the date is ascertained, and which deserve the name of poems) is the thanksgiving Ode of Moses on passing the Red Sea, the most perfect in its kind, and the true and genuine effusion of the joyful affections. Thus the origin of the ode may be traced into that of poetry itself, and appears to be coeval with the commencement of religion, or more properly the creation of man.

The

³ *De Legibus*, iii.

⁴ *Antiq. Rom.* ii. 70.

⁵ This conclusion appears to me neither consonant to reason nor to fact. The first use of poetry was probably

The Hebrews cultivated this kind of poetry above every other, and therefore may well be supposed to have been peculiarly ex-

to preserve the remembrance of events, and not the expressions of passion; accordingly, the remains of the first poetic compositions appear to have been of the former kind. One instance was given in a preceding Lecture relative to the history of Lamech, and another may here be added concerning that of Nimrod—"He was a mighty hunter (rather warrior) before the Lord:" wherefore it is said:—

"As Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord."

Agreeable to this idea is an observation respecting the Arabians, of the late ingenious but ill-treated Dr Brown:

"The *oldest compositions* are in *rythm* or *rude verse*, and "are often cited as *proofs* of their *subsequent history*." It is not only evident that Moses applied them in this way, but also that they were long prior to any example of the existence of an ode; which, however, seems to have been in fact, as well as in nature, the next species of poetic composition. S. H.

The rude poetry of barbarous nations (as far as we can judge from the accounts of those who have visited the South-Sea islands and the Indian nations) relates in general to *love* and *war*; it is employed in cherishing, or in exciting the passions. Notwithstanding, therefore, the ingenuity of the above remark (which on that account I would not omit) I am inclined to think there is more foundation for our author's theory than Mr. H. supposes. See *Essays Hist. and Mor.* Ess. i. p. 31. T.

cellent in it. It was usual in every period of that nation to celebrate in songs of joy their gratitude to God, their Saviour, for every fortunate event, and particularly for success in war. Hence the triumphal odes of Moses, of Deborah, of David. The schools of the prophets were also, in all probability, coeval with the republic; and were certainly antecedent to the monarchy by many years: there, as we have already seen, the youth, educated in the prophetic discipline, applied themselves, among other studies, particularly to sacred poetry, and celebrated the praises of Almighty God in Lyric compositions, accompanied with music. Under the government of David, however, the arts of music and poetry were in their most flourishing state. By him no less than four thousand singers or musicians were appointed from among the Levites⁶, under two hundred and eighty-eight principal singers, or leaders of the band, and distributed into twenty-four companies, who officiated weekly by rotation in the temple, and whose whole business was to perform the sacred

⁶ 1 CHRON. xxiii. 5.

hymns;

hymns; the one part chanting or singing, and the other playing upon different instruments⁷. The chief of these were Afaph, Heman, and Iduthun, who also, as we may presume from the titles of the Psalms, were composers of hymns⁸. From so very splendid an establishment, so far surpassing every other appointment of the kind, some reasonable conjectures may be formed concerning the original dignity and grandeur of the Hebrew Ode. We must remember too, that we at present possess only some ruins as it were of that magnificent fabric, deprived of every ornament, except that splendour and elegance, which, notwithstanding the obscurity that antiquity has cast over them, still shine forth in the sentiments and language. Hence, in treating of the Hebrew ode, we must be content to omit entirely what relates to the sacred music, and the nature of the instruments which accompanied the vocal performance; though there is the utmost probability, that these circumstances were not without their influence, as

⁷ 1 CHRON. XXV. 1—7.

⁸ See also 2 CHRON. XXIX. 30.

far as respects the form and construction of the different species of ode. Our information upon these subjects is, indeed, so very scanty, that I esteem it safer to be silent altogether concerning them, than to imitate the example of some of the learned, who after saying much, have, in fact, said nothing. I shall therefore proceed to a brief inquiry into the general nature and properties of this species of poetry; and after that, we shall be better qualified to judge of those specimens which have been transmitted to us by the Hebrew writers.

Of all the different forms of poetical composition, there is none more agreeable, harmonious, elegant, diversified and sublime than the ode; and these qualities are displayed in the order, sentiments, imagery, diction, and versification. The principal beauty of an ode consists in the order and arrangement of the subject; but this excellence, while it is easily felt, is difficult to be described, for there is this peculiarity attending it, that the form of the ode is by no means confined to any certain rule for the exact and accurate distribution of the parts. It is lively and unconstrained: when the
subject

subject is sublime, it is impetuous, bold, and sometimes might almost deserve the epithet licentious as to symmetry and method: but even in this case, and uniformly in every other, a certain facility and ease must pervade the whole, which may afford at least the appearance of unaffected elegance, and seem to prefer nature to art. This appearance is best preserved by an exordium plain, simple, and expressive; by a display and detail of incidents and sentiments rising delicately and artfully from each other, yet without any appearance of art; and by a conclusion not pointed or epigrammatic, but finishing by a gentle turn of the sentiment in a part where it is least expected, and sometimes as it were by chance⁹. Thus it is not the metre or versification which constitutes this species of composition; for unless all these circumstances be adverted to, it is plain that whatever be the merit of the production, it cannot with any propriety be termed

⁹ I do not know any Lyric poems, to which this commendation is more applicable than the Arabic: I do not speak of all, but the best of them. I have scarcely ever observed happier conclusions to any poems, than to some of the Arabic odes. M.

an ode. Many of the odes of Horace are entirely in this form, as well as almost all of those few which our countryman Hannes has left behind him. There are two Lyric Poems in the *Sylvæ* of Papinius Statius¹⁰, of which the versification is full, sonorous, and flowing; the sentiments elegant; the diction, if not highly polished, yet ardent and glowing; on the whole, however, the form, the grace, the express manner of the ode is wanting.

The sentiments and imagery must be suitable to the nature of the subject and the composition, which is varied and unconfined by strict rule or method. On familiar subjects they will be sprightly, florid, and agreeable; on sublime topics, solemn, bold, and vivid; on every subject, highly elegant, expressive, and diversified. Imagery from natural objects is peculiarly adapted to the ode; historical common-places may also be admitted, as well as descriptions lively but short, and (when it rises to any uncommon strain of sublimity) frequent personifications. The diction must be choice

¹⁰ Lib. iv. *Sylv.* 5, & 7.

and elegant, it must be also luminous, clear, and animated; it must possess some elegancies peculiar to itself, and be as distinct from the common language of poetry, as the form and fashion of the production is from the general cast of poetical composition. In this that happiness of expression, for which Horace is so justly celebrated, wholly consists. A sweetness and variety in the versification is indispensable, according to the nature of the language, or as the infinite diversity of subjects may require.

It is much to be lamented, that ~~in~~ treating of the Hebrew ode, we must of necessity be silent concerning the numbers or versification, which (though we are almost totally ignorant of its nature and principles) we have the utmost reason to suppose was accommodated to the music, and agreeable to the genius of the language¹¹. In every other respect, as the force and elegance of

¹¹ This may be presumed from a variety of circumstances, particularly such as might be pointed out in the cxxxvth Psalm, where *Jah* is sometimes used and sometimes *Jehovah*, where either might, for any other than a metrical consideration, have been indiscriminately used.

the language, the beauty and dignity of the sentiments and imagery, the different graces and excellencies of order and arrangement, I shall not hesitate to prefer the Hebrew writers to the Lyric poets of every other nation. But lest we should dubiously wander in so extensive a field, it will be proper to prescribe some kind of limit to our course, which may be conveniently done, by distributing all the diversities of this species of composition into three general classes. Of the first class the general characteristic will be sweetness, of the last sublimity; and between these we may introduce one of a middle nature, as partaking of the properties of both¹¹. The qualities which may be accounted

¹¹ It will not be unseasonable in this place, perhaps, to offer a few remarks on the peculiar character of the Lyric Poetry of David. For some commentators by too indiscriminately praising it, have paid no regard to its peculiar characteristics; and thus from an intemperate zeal, the poet has even lost a part of that commendation which was justly due to him.

For my part, judging rather by my taste and feelings, than by any rules of art, I think David seems to excel in this first species of ode, the characteristic of which is sweetness. He is unequalled when he describes the ob-
jects

counted common to all the three classes, are variety and elegance.

Although

jects of nature, the fields, the woods, the fountains; and of his other odes those are most excellent, which he composed in his exiles: nor is this any thing extraordinary; he had then more leisure for the cultivation of poetry, he experienced more vivid sensations than at other times, and he treated of those objects which, being immediately before his eyes, brought back to his mind the recollection of his youth, and inspired his imagination with fresh vigour. It is however remarkable, that those which he composed in his old age, when he fled from Absalom, not only equal the fruits of his early years, but even surpass them in fire and spirit: if, as I am fully persuaded, the xxiiiid and xliid Psalms were produced during that exile.

On the other hand, those Psalms interest me less, in which the more violent affections prevail, whether of sorrow or indignation, not even excepting such as imprecate curses on his enemies. There is in these much of the terrific; but in reading them, the heart is not affected, the passions are not vehemently excited. These odes do not possess that general solemnity and awful sublimity which characterize the book of Job, a composition of a different class, but possessing exquisite force in moving the passions. Neither are loftiness of diction, or boldness in describing objects of terror, to be accounted amongst the excellencies of David; for in these respects he not only yields, in my opinion, to Job, but also to Moses. I do not except the xviiiith Psalm, in the first verses of which I observe more of art and design, than of
real

Although the Lyric Poetry of the Hebrews is always occupied upon serious subjects, nor ever descends to that levity which is admitted into that of other nations; the character of sweetness is by no means inconsistent with it. The sweetness of the Hebrew ode consists in the gentle and tender passions which it excites; in the gay and florid imagery, and in the chaste and unostentatious diction which it employs. The passions which it generally affects are those of love, tenderness, hope, cheerfulness, and pensive sorrow. In the sixty-third Psalm the royal Prophet, supposed to be then an exile in the wilderness, expresses most elegantly the sentiments of tenderness and love. The voice of grief and complaint is tempered with the consolations of hope in the eightieth Psalm: and the ninety-second consists wholly of joy, which is not the less sincere, because it is not excessive. The sweetness of all

real horror and sublimity: in what follows, the warmth of the composition subsides, and it becomes more temperate than might be expected from such an exordium. The Mosaic Psalms I confess please me more in this respect, and therefore I prefer the xxixth to that in question. M.

these

these in composition, sentiment, diction, and arrangement, has never been equalled by the finest productions of all the Heathen Muses and Graces united. Though none of the above are deficient in imagery, I must confess I have never met with any image so truly pleasing and delightful as the following description of the Deity in the character of a shepherd :

“ The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want ;
 “ In tender grass he giveth me to lie down ;
 “ He guideth me to streams that gently flow ”.

How

“ Ps. xxiii. 1. This Psalm is deserving of all the commendation which our author has bestowed upon it. If I am not mistaken, it was composed by David, when he was expelled from the holy city and temple : for in the 6th verse he hopes for a return to the house of God. Since of all the divine mercies he particularly commemorates this, that in time of necessity he wants for nothing, and is even received to a banquet in the sight of his enemies, I conceive it to relate to that time, when flying from the contest with his disobedient son, he pitched his camp beyond Jordan, and was in danger of seeing his little army perish for want of provision in that uncultivated region, or of being deserted by all his friends. Affairs, however, turned out quite different : for what he could not foresee or hope, the Almighty performed for him. The veteran soldiers flowed in to him from every

How graceful and animated is that rich and flourishing picture of nature, which is exhibited

every quarter, and his whole camp was so liberally supported by the good and opulent citizens, that in this very situation he was enabled to collect an army and risk the event of a battle. See 2 SAM. xvii. 26—29.

He therefore compares himself to a sheep, and the Almighty to a shepherd: a very obvious figure, and which every day occurred to his sight during his stay in those desert parts. The sheep, timid, defenceless, exposed to all the beasts of prey, and possessed of little knowledge or power of foreseeing or avoiding danger, are indebted for life, safety, and every thing to the care of the shepherd. We must remember also, that the exiled king had formerly himself been a shepherd. The recollection therefore of his past life breaks in upon his mind. "JEHOVAH," says he, "is my shepherd, I shall want nothing." It is his province to provide for my existence, and to procure for me those blessings which I am unable to obtain for myself. The *tender herb* (*dasha*, which is properly the *virgin herb*, or that which has not budded into seed or blossom) is more grateful to sheep than that which is seeded (*gnefeb*) GEN. i. 10, 11. In meadows, therefore, covered with the green and tender grass, he supposes JEHOVAH to cause him to rest under his care. He was expelled to Lebanon, from the tops of which cataracts of melted snow are constantly falling: these are dangerous for sheep to approach, nor is the water sufficiently wholesome. He therefore adds, that he is led to waters gently flowing, where the clear stream meanders through the fertile plain. The scene which
was

exhibited in the sixty-fifth Psalm. When the Prophet, with a fertility of expression

cor-
was before his eyes consisted of rude hills and vallies, deep, gloomy, dark, and horrid, the haunts only of the fiercest animals. I would here remark, that the word *תַּיִלְמַוֶּת*, which according to the Masoretic punctuation is read *Tzilmavet*, and translated the *shadows of death*, would be better read *Tzilamot*, and translated simply shades, or the *valley of the shades*, and I am led to this conclusion by comparing it with the Arabic. There is no safety for the sheep in these vallies but in the care of the shepherd. You are therefore presented with a great variety of contrasted imagery in this Psalm; on the one hand, the open pastures, and the flowing rivulets, the recollection of which never fails to delight; and on the other hand, the cheerless and gloomy vallies, which inspire the reader with fresh horror. Descending from figurative to plain language, he next celebrates the bounty of God in preparing him a banquet in the face of his enemies; and therefore regales himself with the delicious hope, that he shall once more be restored to his sacred temple. M.

Mr. TATE (in our common version of the Psalms) has been remarkably fortunate in his paraphrase of the first verses of this Psalm; so much indeed, that for simplicity, and a close adherence to the spirit of the original, I cannot help preferring it to the celebrated translation of Mr. Addison:

- " The Lord himself, the mighty Lord,
- " Vouchsafes to be my guide;
- " The shepherd, by whose constant care
- " My wants are all supplied.

" In

correspondent to the subject, praises the beneficence of the Deity in watering the earth and making it fruitful. On a sublime subject also, but still one of the gay and agreeable kind, I mean the inauguration of Solomon, which is celebrated in the seventy-second Psalm, there is such variety and beauty of imagery, such a splendour of diction, such elegance in the composition, that I believe it will be impossible in the whole compass of literature, sacred or profane, to find such an union of sublimity with sweetness and grace.

These few select examples of the elegant and beautiful in Lyric composition, I have pointed out for your more attentive consideration; and I am of opinion, that in all the treasures of the Muses you will seek in

“ In tender grass he makes me feed,
“ And gently there repose;
“ And leads me to cool shades, and where
“ Refreshing water flows.”

The fifteenth Psalm is also admirably translated by the same hand: the last verse in particular is beautiful and sublime: though the classical reader will see that the translator had his eye on the “*Si fractus illabatur orbis*” of Horace. T.

vain

vain for models more perfect. I will add one other specimen, which, if I am not mistaken, is expressive of the true Lyric form and character; and compresses in a small compass all the merits and elegance incidental to that species of composition. It is, if I may be allowed to use the expression of a very polite writer,

A drop from Helicon, a flower

Cull'd from the Muse's favourite bower¹⁴.

The Psalmist contemplating the harmony which pervaded the solemn assembly of the people, at the celebration of one of their festivals, expresses himself nearly as follows:

P S A L M CXXXIII. ¹⁵

" How blest the sight, the joy how sweet,

" When brothers join'd with brothers meet

" In bands of mutual love!

" Less sweet the liquid fragrance, shed

" On Aaron's consecrated head,

" Ran trickling from above:

" And

¹⁴ CALLIMACH. Hymn. in Apoll. v. 112.

¹⁵ This Psalm is one of the fifteen, which are entitled, *Odes of the Ascensions*: that is, which were sung when the people came up either to worship in Jerusalem at the annual festivals, or perhaps from the Babylonish captivity. The return is certainly called "the *ascension* or *coming up* from Babylon," EZR. vii. 9. And the old SYRIAC translator,

" And reach'd his beard, and reach'd his vest :

" Less sweet the dew on Hermon's breast,

" Or

translator, who explains the subjects of the Psalms by appropriate titles, refers to this circumstance almost all the Psalms that bear this inscription; some of them indeed without sufficient foundation; but many of them manifestly have relation to it. Theodoret indiscriminately explains them all as relating to the Babylonish captivity; and thus illustrates the title: " Odes of the Ascensions; " Theodotion, Songs of the Ascensions: But Symmachus and Aculas, on the returns. It is evident that " the coming up, and the ascent relate to the return of " the people from the Babylonish captivity." THEOD. in Ps. cxx. But we must not omit remarking also, that both in the Old and New Testament there is scarcely a phrase more common than " to go up to Jerusalem, to go " up to the feast," &c. (See JOHN vii. 8.) And observe above the rest, Ps. cxxii. which can scarcely be applied to any thing but the celebration of some festival. What the Jews say about the steps *ascending* to the Temple is unworthy the attention of any person of common sense. In the last period of this Psalm, the particle *shom* (shom) is necessarily to be referred to the word *tzion* (tzion); and there is nothing else to which it can be referred. Besides, to what, except to *Sion*, can the promises *Berachab* and *Chajem* relate? (See particularly Ps. cxxxii. 13, and 15.) These words are indeed ambiguous, so that they may refer either to temporal or eternal happiness, or to both alike. (Compare DEUT. xxviii. 2, &c. with Ps. xxiv. 5. and PROV. xxvii. 27. with DAN. xii. 2.) And in

“ Or Sion’s hill descend :
 “ That hill has God with blessings crown’d,
 “ There promis’d grace that knows no bound,
 “ And life that knows no end ¹⁶.”

in this place, according to the nature of the mystical allegory, they may be interpreted in either sense. If these remarks be true, the critics have taken a great deal of pains about nothing. There is no occasion for emendation. If the ellipsis be only supplied by the word *ce-tal* (as the dew) or simply by the particle *ve* or *ce* (and or as) before the word *descending* (or which descends) the construction will be complete. In the same manner Hezekiah says in ISAIAH :

“ As a swallow, (and as) a crane, so I chattered.”
 chap. xxxviii. 14.

Author’s Note.

¹⁶ On a former occasion I thought it necessary to trouble the reader with an imitation of Buchanan’s version of this beautiful Psalm. I have since endeavoured to complete it. If the measure should seem in the eyes of some to bear too near a resemblance to that of their old acquaintance Sternhold, I have only to urge, that its simplicity seems to be more suitable to the subject, than that which Mr. Merrick has adopted. Notwithstanding our author’s ingenious defence of his own (which is also Mr. Merrick’s) interpretation of the last verse, I am well convinced that Buchanan’s version is right, and that the particle *shom* in the last verse relates to the persons, and not to the place : indeed, not only a great part of the general utility, but even the beauty of this Ode is lost, by interpreting it otherwise. The following I submit with all

humility to the judgment of the reader, merely that I may not leave the former stanzas imperfect :

PSALM CXXXIII.

Sweet is the love, that mutual glows
Within each brother's breast ;
And binds in gentlest bonds each heart,
All blessing, and all blest :
Sweet as the odorous balsam pour'd
On Aaron's sacred head,
Which o'er his beard, and down his vest,
A breathing fragrance shed.
Like morning dews on Sion's mount
That spread their silver rays ;
And deck with gems the verdant pomp,
Which Hermon's top displays.
To such the Lord of life and love
His blessing shall extend :
On earth a life of joy and peace,
And life that ne'er shall end. .

T.

LECTURE XXVI.

THE INTERMEDIATE OR MIXED STYLE OF THE HEBREW ODE.

The Lyric Poetry of the intermediate or mixed style consists of an union of sweetness and sublimity.—The xcist and lxxxist Psalms explained and critically illustrated.—Of the digressions of the Hebrew poets, also of Pindar; not upon the same principle.—A criticism upon the lxxviiith Psalm.—The xixth Psalm in English verse.

HAVING dismissed the subject of the more beautiful species of ode, in order to proceed by proper stages to what I deem the summit of excellence and sublimity in the Lyric Poetry of the Hebrews, it will be necessary to rest a while, and to bestow some little attention upon that middle style of composition, to which I adverted as constituting one of the grand divisions of this order of poems. This again may be considered as admitting of a subdivision, as including both those Lyric compositions, in which sweetness and sublimity are so uniformly blended, that every part of the poem may be said to partake equally of both; and

P 2

those,

those, in which these qualities separately occur in such a manner, that the complexion of the poem is altogether changeable and diversified. Of each species I shall endeavour to produce an example or two.

The subject of the ninety-first Psalm is the security, the success, and the rewards of piety. The exordium exhibits the pious man placing all his dependance upon Almighty God :

“ He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most
“ High ;

“ Who lodgeth under the shadow of the Omni-
“ potent ;

“ Who saith to JEHOVAH, thou art my hope and
“ my fortress !

“ My God, in whom I trust * :—

And

* This beautiful exordium has been most egregiously mistaken by the Masorites, and by many commentators and translators : whose errors will be most effectually demonstrated, by removing the difficulties of which they complain. Thus the *אמר* is in *Benoni* as well as *ישב* ; the future *יתלון* also has the force of a participle, by the ellipsis of *אשר* ; of which, to go no further, we have three examples in this very Psalm, ver. 5 and 6 : thus also Symmachus, who has translated the first verse in this manner :

“ He dwelling under the canopy of the Most High,
“ Lodging under the shadow of the Mighty One.”

Whence

And immediately leaving the sentence unfinished, he apostrophizes to the same person, whom he had been describing :

“ He indeed shall deliver thee
 “ From the snare of the fowler, from the destroy-
 “ ing pestilence.”

The

Whence it is plain, that he did not take the verb *אמר* as if it were the first person of the future, as the Masorites have done ; whence principally the error has originated : nor indeed has he compacted into one nugatory proposition the two members of the first verse, which are parallel and synonymous. Then in ver. 3. an apostrophe very easy and distinct is made to the person to whom the preceding expressions relate : where it is also to be remarked, that the particle *כי* is not causal but affirmative, *indeed or in fact*, as in Ps. lxxvii. 12. 1 SAM. xiv. 39, and 44. and in many other parts of Scripture. But to demonstrate more clearly this matter by example, the whole form and nature of this exordium is perfectly the same with that of Ps. cxxviii. which has never been considered as involving any obscurity.

“ Blessed is every man who feareth JEHOVAH,
 “ And who walketh in his paths :
 “ Thou, indeed, shalt eat the labour of thy hands :
 “ O happy art thou, and well shall it be with thee.”

But if, after all, any reader should not be satisfied with the apostrophe formed from the abrupt sentence, he may take the verb *אמר* for the third person preterite, as the

The imagery that follows is beautiful and diversified, and at the same time uncommonly solemn and sublime :

- “ With his feathers will he cover thee ,
 “ And under his wings shalt thou find protec-
 “ tion :
 “ His truth shall be thy shield and thy defence.
 “ Thou shalt not fear from the terror by night ;
 “ From the arrow that flieth by day ;
 “ From the pestilence that walketh in darkness ;
 “ From the destruction that wasteth at noon.
 “ A thousand shall fall at thy side ;
 “ And ten thousand at thy right-hand :
 “ To thee it shall not approach.”

How excellent also are the succeeding images, the guard of angels, the treading under foot the fiercest and most formidable animals :

SYR. does. Thus the first verse will be the subject, and the second the predicate of the proposition. To this explication I am not averse, and it is certainly much better than that which is now generally received. But even in this manner, from the condensing of two verses into one sentence, there will arise a languour in the sentiment, and they will form almost one and the same proposition.

Author's Note.

² See a note on the History of the Caliph Vathek, p. 245, and 319. T.

I

and

and afterwards, that sudden but easy and elegant change of the persons³?

“ Because

³ I apprehend there is no change of person till the 14th verse; for the 10th verse I take to be of quite a different nature.

“ For thou, JEHOVAH, art my hope :

“ Very high hast thou placed thy refuge.”

There are many interpretations of this period, which are differently approved by different persons. One of these is, that the first member consists of an address from the believer to God, and the second of a reply from the Prophet to the believer: which is extremely harsh and improbable, although the plain and obvious construction of the passage favours this opinion. Others, among which are the old translators, suppose, that in the second line there is no change of persons at all, but that JEHOVAH is still spoken of:

“ Who hast placed thy dwelling on high :”

which is altogether nothing. Others, in fine, to avoid these absurdities, have fallen into still greater; for they give quite a new turn to the sentence, altering the construction in this manner :

“ For thou, JEHOVAH, who art my hope,

“ Hast placed thy refuge very high :”

But this I think will scarcely be endured by a good ear, which is ever so little accustomed to the Hebrew idiom. THEODORET formerly made a different attempt upon the passage :

“ Because he hath loved me, therefore will I
“ deliver him :

“ I will exalt him, for he hath known my name.”
If

“ There is wanting to the construction of the sentence, THOU HAST SAID, *thou Lord art my hope*.
“ This is the usual idiom of the prophetic writings, and
“ especially of the Psalms.”

I have very little doubt that this is the true sense of the passage. If, however, this ellipsis be unpleasing to the reader (and I confess it is very harsh) we must, I believe, at last have recourse to the correction of Bishop Hare, one of the ablest of critics; who thinks, that for *אמרת* we should read *אמרת*. It is indeed rather a bold conjecture, yet not improbable, if we consider the parallel places, PSALM xvi. 2. (where *אמרת* seems to have been the reading followed by all the old translators, except the CHAL. “ and also occurs in three MSS.” K.) Ps. xxxi. 15. cxi. 7. cxlii. 6. But what if we read *מחשך*, with only the change of a single letter? “ For thee (that is as “ *to thee*) JEHOVAH is thy hope.” This correction was suggested to me by the ingenious Mr. MERRICK, who has lately published a TRANSLATION OF THE PSALMS INTO ENGLISH VERSE; a work of great erudition, of infinite taste and elegance, and replete with all the choicest beauties of poetry. *Author's Note.*

For thou, JEHOVAH, art my hope;
Very high hast thou placed thy habitation.

I believe there is no occasion in this instance to practise on the original. The imagery here remotely alluded to, is placed in a fuller point of view by Habakkuk, chap. ii. ver. 9.

“ Woe

If any reader will carefully weigh and consider the nature and dignity of this imagery, having due respect at the same time to the principles of the mystical allegory, I am persuaded he will agree with me, that something of a mystical design is concealed under the literal meaning of this Psalm. Without a question, the pious person ⁺, the king, or high-priest perhaps, who in the literal sense is the principal character of the poem, is meant in reality to represent some greater

“ Woe unto him who coveteth an evil covetousness for his
“ house;

“ That he may set his nest on high;

“ That he may be delivered from the power of evil.”

And Obadiah, chap. i. ver. 3.

“ He that dwelleth in the cliffs of the rock, the height of
“ his habitation,

“ Hath said in his heart, Who shall bring me down to
“ the ground?

“ Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle,

“ And though thou set thy nest among the stars,

“ Thence will I bring thee down, saith JEHOVAH.”

S. H.

⁺ The LXX. CHALD. VULG. SYR. ARAB. ÆTHIOP. prefix the name of David to this Psalm. The Jews suppose it to relate to the Messiah. See also MATT. iv. 6. LUKE iv. 10, 11. *Author's Note.*

and

and sublimer personage. But leaving this part of the subject to the investigation of the divine, I submit it to any critic of true taste and discernment, whether the third ode of the fourth book of Horace (the beauty of which has been justly celebrated, and which bears a great resemblance to that under our consideration) is not greatly excelled by the sacred poet, as well in grace and elegance, as in force and dignity^s.

The

^s At a very early period of life I amused myself with translating some of the Odes of Horace into English verse. The Ode alluded to in the text was one of those which I attempted. I subjoin my translation on this occasion, merely because I think it gives the sense of the original more completely than Francis's version, and the English Reader will probably wish to see the Ode which is brought into comparison with that of the Psalmist.

TO MELPOMENE.

He, on whose early natal hour
 Thou, queen of verse! hast sweetly smil'd,
 Breath'd all thy fascinating power,
 And mark'd him for thy favourite child:

He emulates no victor's place,
 Nor mixes in the Isthmian games;
 Nor, in the arduous chariot race,
 Th' Achaian trophies anxious claims.

He

The eighty-first Psalm will serve as another example upon this occasion, being pervaded by an exquisite union of sublimity and sweetness. It is an ode composed for the feast of Trumpets in the first new moon of the civil year⁶. The exordium contains an exhortation to celebrate the praises of the

He ne'er, adorn'd with conquering bays,
And the proud pomp of baneful war,
Shall catch the vagrant voice of praise,
While captive kings surround his car :

But where the fertile Tiber glides,
To secret shades shall oft retire ;
And there shall charm the list'ning tides,
And tune the soft Æolian lyre.

Thy noblest sons, Imperial Rome !
Assign to me the laureate crown ;
And Envy now abash'd and dumb,
Nor dares to speak, nor dares to frown.

O Goddess of the vocal shell !
Whose power can sway both earth and sea,
Can the mute fishes teach t' excel
The dying cygnet's melody :

To thee, sweet Muse ! I owe this fame,
That e'er I pleas'd the gift is thine ;
That, as I pass, fond crowds exclaim—
“ The Roman bard ! the man divine !”

T.

⁶ See RELAND. *Antiq. Heb.* iv. 7.

Almighty

Almighty with music and song, and (as is frequent in these productions of the Hebrews) is replete with animation and joy, even to exultation :

“ Sing unto God our strength ;

“ A song of triumph to the God of Jacob.”

The different instruments of music are named, as is common in the Lyric compositions of all other nations :

“ Take the psaltery, bring hither the timbrel,

“ The pleasant harp, with the lute.”

The trumpet is particularly alluded to, because the solemn use of it on their great festivals was prescribed by the Mosaic law. The commemoration of the giving of the law, associated with the sound of the trumpet (which was the signal of liberty)⁷ introduces, in a manner spontaneously, the miseries of the Egyptian bondage, the recovery of their freedom, and the communication with God upon mount Sinai (the awfulness of which is expressed in a very few words, “ the secret

⁷ See LEV. xxiii. 24. NUM. xxix. 1. and LEV. xxv. 9, 10.

“ place

“ place of thunder”) and finally the contention with their Creator at the waters of Meribah. The mention of Meribah introduces another idea, namely, the ingratitude and contumacy of the Israelites, who appear to have been ever unmindful of the favours and indulgence of their heavenly Benefactor. The remainder of the ode, therefore, contains an affectionate exhortation of God with his people, a confirmation of his former promises, and a tender complaint, that his favourable intentions towards them have been so long prevented by their disobedience. Thus the object and end of this poem appears to be an exhortation to obedience from the consideration of the paternal love, the beneficence, and the promises of the Deity; and we have seen with how much art, elegance, variety, and ingenuity, this is accomplished. In order to complete the beauty of this composition, the conclusion is replete with all the graces of sentiment, imagery, and diction. The sudden and frequent change of persons is remarkable; but it is by no means harsh or obscure. Some allowance is however to be made for the Hebrew idiom, as well as for the state of the author's

author's mind : he is not under the influence of art but of nature ; through the impetuosity of passion, therefore, his transitions are frequent from figure and allusion to plain language, and back again with a kind of desultory inconstancy.

In the last Lecture I treated in general of the disposition and arrangement of Lyric composition, and endeavoured, in some degree, to define its usual symmetry and outline. But on abstruse and difficult subjects, example is of more avail than the utmost accuracy of description. To him, therefore, who wishes to form a correct idea of this kind of poem, I will venture to recommend the Psalm which we have just examined ; not doubting, that if he can make himself master of its general character, genius, and arrangement, he will feel perfectly satisfied concerning the nature and form of a perfect ode.

In both these specimens, the style and cadence of the whole poem flows in one equal and uniform tenour ; but there are others, which are more changeable and diversified, more unequal both in style and sentiment. These, although they occasionally incline to
the

the character of sweetness, and occasionally to that of sublimity, may nevertheless (though upon a different principle) be properly classed among the odes of this intermediate style. Such are those which, from a mild and gentle exordium, rise gradually to sublimity, both in the subject and sentiments; such also are those, which commence in a mournful strain, and conclude with exultation and triumph. Such, in fine, are all those in which the style or matter is in any respect diversified and unequal. This inequality of style is perfectly consistent with the nature of Lyric composition; for variety is one of the greatest ornaments, if not essentials, of the ode. Since, therefore, for the sake of variety, Lyric writers in particular are indulged in the liberty of frequent digressions; that boldness in thus diverging from the subject is not only excuseable, but on many occasions is really worthy of commendation. Possibly a brief inquiry into the nature of those liberties which the Hebrew poets have allowed themselves in this respect, or rather into the general method and principles of their Lyric compositions, will not

not be thought altogether unseasonable in this place.

By far the greater part of the Lyric Poetry of the Hebrews, is occupied wholly in the celebration of the power and goodness of Almighty God, in extolling his kindness and beneficence to his chosen people, and in imploring his assistance and favour in time of adversity : in other words, the usual subjects of these odes are so connected with every part of the Sacred History, as to afford ample scope for those digressions which are most pleasing, and most congenial to this species of composition. Thus, whether the theme be gay or mournful ; whether the events which they celebrate be prosperous or adverse ; whether they return thanks to God their deliverer for assistance in trouble, or with the humility of suppliants acknowledge the justice of the divine correction ; the memory of former times spontaneously occurs, and a variety of incidents and circumstances, of times, of seasons, of countries, of nations, all the miracles in Egypt, in the wilderness, in Judea, are presented to their recollection : and all these so naturally connect with the subject, that whatever of ornament
is

is deduced from them, so far from appearing foreign to it, seems rather an essential part of the principal matter. It may, therefore, be with modesty asserted of the Hebrew ode, that from the nature of the subjects, which it usually embraces, it is possessed of so easy an access to some of the most elegant sources of poetical imagery, and has consequently so many opportunities for agreeable digression; that with unbounded freedom and uncommon variety, are united the most perfect order, and the most pleasing uniformity.

The happy boldness of Pindar in his digressions is deservedly celebrated; but as he was very differently situated from those poets who are at present under our consideration, so the nature of his subject, and the principles of his composition, are altogether different from theirs; and a different reason is to be assigned for the liberties which he assumed in his Lyric productions. We are in no want of materials to enable us to form a perfect judgment of the genius of Pindar; there are about forty of his odes remaining, and the subject of them all is exactly similar. They are all composed in celebra-

tion of some victorious chief, whose praise is heightened and illustrated by the circumstances of his birth, ancestry, manners, or country. Since, therefore, this poet was professedly the herald of the Olympic conquerors, unless he had determined to assume great liberty in treating of those topics, and even on some occasions to have recourse to topics very foreign to the principal subject, his poems must have been little better than a stale and disgusting repetition. His apology, therefore, is necessity, and on this ground he has obtained not only pardon but commendation; and many things, which in another poet could neither be defended nor probably endured, in Pindar have been approved and extolled. Lest I should seem to assert rashly on this occasion, I will explain myself by an example. The third of the Pythian odes is inscribed to Hiero, at that time labouring under a grievous and chronic disease. The poet taking advantage of the opportunity to impart a degree of variety to his poem, introduces it with a solemn address, invoking the medical aid of Chiron or Æsculapius, if it be possible for them to revisit the earth. But surely, on such

such an occasion, it would be excusable in no writer but Pindar to expend more than one hundred verses, that is, above half the poem, on the history of *Æsculapius*. Nor indeed could we easily pardon it in Pindar himself, but from the consideration that he had already written an ode (the fourth) in praise of the same *Hiero*, upon a victory obtained in the Olympic games. But we are willing to excuse the boldness of a poet, who, even with a degree of rash impetuosity, escapes from such narrow limits into a more spacious field. It is therefore no discommendation of the Hebrew poets to say, that in this respect they are materially different from Pindar; nor does it detract from the merit of Pindar to assert, that, from the more favourable circumstances of the Hebrews, their Lyric Poetry is more genuine and perfect.

The seventy-seventh Psalm will afford some illustration of what has been remarked concerning the nature and economy of the Hebrew ode. This Psalm is composed in what I call the intermediate style, and is of that diversified and unequal kind which ascends from a cool and temperate exordium

to a high degree of sublimity. The Prophet, oppressed with a heavy weight of affliction, displays the extreme dejection and perturbation of his soul, and most elegantly and pathetically describes the conflicts and internal contests to which he is subjected, before he is enabled to rise from the depths of woe to any degree of hope or confidence. In the character of a suppliant he first pours forth his earnest prayers to the God of his hope :

“ I lifted up my voice unto God and cried ;

“ I lifted up my voice unto God, that he should
“ hear me.”

But even prayers afford him no sufficient consolation. He next endeavours to mitigate his sorrow by the remembrance of former times ; but this, on the contrary, only seems to exaggerate his sufferings, by the comparison of his present adversity with his former happiness, and extorts from him the following pathetic expostulation :

“ Will the Lord reject me for ever ?

“ And will he be reconciled no more ?

“ Is his mercy eternally ceased ;

“ Doth

“ Doth his promise fail from generation to generation ?

“ Hath God forgotten to be merciful ?

“ Or hath he in anger shut up his pity ?”

Again, recollecting the nature of the divine dispensations in chastising man, “ the change “ of the right-hand of the Most High ;” in other words, the different methods by which the Almighty seeks the salvation of his people, appearing frequently to frown upon and persecute those “ in whom he delighteth :” reconsidering also the vast series of mercies which he had bestowed upon his chosen people ; the miracles which he had wrought in their favour, in a word, the goodness, the holiness, the power of the great Ruler of the universe ; with all the ardour of gratitude and affection, he bursts forth into a strain of praise and exultation. In this passage we are at a loss which to admire most, the ease and grace with which the digression is made, the choice of the incidents, the magnificence of the imagery, or the force and elegance of the diction,

“ Thy way, O God, is in holiness ;

“ What God is great as our God ?

Q 3

“ Thou

- " Thou art the God that doest wonders ;
" Thou hast made known thy strength among
" the nations :
" With thy arm hast thou redeemed thy people,
" The sons of Jacob and Joseph.
" The waters saw thee, O God !
" The waters saw thee, and trembled ;
" The depths also were troubled.
" The clouds overflowed with water ;
" The skies sent forth thunder ;
" Thine arrows also went abroad :
" The voice of thy thunder was in the atmo-
" sphere ;
" Thy lightnings enlightened the world,
" The earth trembled, and was disturbed."

The other example, to which I shall refer you on this occasion, is composed upon quite a different plan ; for it declines gradually from an exordium uncommonly splendid and sublime, to a gentler and more moderate strain, to the softest expressions of piety and devotion. The whole composition abounds with great variety of both sentiment and imagery. You will, from these circumstances, almost conjecture that I am alluding to the nineteenth Psalm. The glory of God is demonstrated in his works both of nature

nature and providence. By exhibiting it, however, in an entire state, though in modern verse, you will more readily perceive the order, method, and arrangement of this beautiful composition.

PSALM XIX. ⁸

“ God the heavens aloud proclaim
 “ Through their wide-extended frame,
 “ And the firmament each hour
 “ Speaks the wonders of his power :
 “ Day to the succeeding day
 “ Joys the notice to convey,
 “ And the nights, in ceaseless round,
 “ Each to each repeats the sound ;
 “ Prompt, without or speech or tongue,
 “ In his praise to form the song.
 “ Pleas’d to hear their voice extend
 “ Far as to her utmost end ;
 “ Earth the heaven-taught knowledge boasts
 “ Through her many-languag’d coasts.

⁸ I have given Mr. Merrick’s translation of this Psalm, as more calculated to illustrate the design of our author in quoting it. I cannot, however, omit mentioning, that Mr. Addison’s paraphrase of a part of this Psalm infinitely excels every translation that I have seen, as well in sublimity as elegance ; and is indeed, in my opinion, the most beautiful and perfect specimen of sacred poetry extant in English verse. T.

Q 4

“ While

“ While the sun, above her head,
“ Sees his tabernacle spread ;
“ And, from out his chamber bright,
“ Like a bridegroom springs to fight ;
“ See him, with gigantic pace,
“ Joyous run his destin’d race.
“ Now, to farthest regions borne,
“ Onward speed, and now return ;
“ And to all, with welcome ray,
“ Life and genial warmth convey.
“ Warmth and life each thankful heart
“ Feels thy law, Great God ! impart ;
“ Clear from every spot it shines,
“ And the guilt-stain’d thought refines ;
“ Truth’s firm base its fame upholds,
“ While it mysteries unfolds ;
“ Which the childlike mind explores,
“ And to heavenly science soars.
“ Prest with sorrows, doubts, and fears,
“ What like this the spirit cheers ?
“ What so perfect, what so pure ?
“ What to Reason’s eye obscure
“ Can such wond’rous light afford,
“ As the dictates of thy word ?
“ Where thy fear its fruit matures,
“ (Fruit that endless years endures)
“ There the mind, to vice a foe,
“ Pants thy blest decrees to know ;
“ And (its will to thine subdu’d)
“ Owns them wise, and just, and good ;
“ Nor

“ Nor can gold such worth acquire
“ From the sev’nth exploring fire;
“ Nor the labour of the bees
“ Can in sweetness vie with these:
“ Taught by them, thy servant’s breast
“ Joys the blessings to attest,
“ Heap’d on those, whose hearts sincere,
“ Learn thy precepts to revere.
“ Best Instructor, from thy ways,
“ Who can tell how oft he strays?
“ Purge me from the guilt that lies
“ Wrapt within my heart’s disguise;
“ Let me thence, by thee renew’d,
“ Each presumptuous sin exclude:
“ So my lot shall ne’er be join’d
“ With the men whose impious mind,
“ Fearless of thy just command,
“ Braves the vengeance of thy hand.
“ Let my tongue, from error free,
“ Speak the words approv’d by thee;
“ To thy all observing eyes
“ Let my thoughts accepted rise:
“ While I thus thy name adore,
“ And thy healing grace implore,
“ Blest Redeemer bow thine ear,
“ God my strength, propitious hear!”

LECTURE XXVII.

OF THE SUBLIME STYLE OF THE HEBREW ODE.

The third species of the Hebrew Ode, the characteristic of which is sublimity. — This sublimity results from three sources. — From the general form and arrangement of the poem exemplified in the 11th and xxivth Psalm. — From the greatness of the sentiments and the force of the language. — The Ode of Moses on passing the Red Sea explained and illustrated. — The brevity of the Hebrew style. — The xxixth Psalm in English verse.

SUBLIMITY was mentioned as the characteristic of a third species of the Hebrew ode. But having already treated very copiously of the sublime in general, both as the effect of sentiment and expression, our present investigation must be confined to that which is peculiar to this species of poetry. Now the sublimity of Lyric compositions results either from the plan, the order and arrangement of the poem; or from those common sources which I formerly specified, the sentiments and the style; or, in some cases, from an union of all, when an aggregate perfection is produced from
the

the beauty of the arrangement, the dignity of the sentiments, and the splendour of the diction. I shall endeavour to exhibit a few examples in each kind; and indeed this subject is every way deserving our attention, since it relates to what may be esteemed the perfection of the Hebrew poetry, for its chief commendation is sublimity, and its sublimest species is the ode.

Let us therefore consider in the first place what degree of sublimity the mere form and disposition of a Lyric Poem can impart to a subject not in itself sublime. We have an example of this in the fiftieth Psalm; the subject of which is of the didactic kind, and belongs to the moral part of theology. It is at first serious and practical, with very little of sublimity or splendour: it sets forth, that the divine favour is not to be conciliated by sacrifices, or by any of the external rites and services of religion, but rather by sincere piety, and by the devout effusions of a grateful heart; and yet, that even these will not be accepted without the strictest attention to justice, and every practical virtue. It consists therefore of two parts: in the first the devout, but ignorant and superstitious

perstitious worshipper is reproved; and in the second the hypocritical pretender to virtue and religion. Each part of the subject, if we regard the imagery and the diction only, is treated rather with variety and elegance, than with sublimity; but if the general effect, if the plot and machinery of the whole be considered, scarcely any thing can appear more truly magnificent. The great Author of nature, by a solemn decree, convokes the whole human race, to be witness of the judgment which he is about to execute upon his people; the august tribunal is established in Sion:

“ JEHOVAH, God of gods,
“ Hath spoken, and hath summoned the earth,
“ From the rising to the setting of the sun:
“ From Sion, from the perfection of beauty, God
“ hath shined.”

The majesty of God is depicted by imagery assumed from the descent upon mount Sinai, which, as I formerly observed, is one of the common-places that supply ornaments of this kind:

“ Our God shall come, and shall not be silent;
“ A fire shall devour before him,
“ And a mighty whirlwind shall surround him.”

The

The heavens and the earth are invoked as witnesses, which is a pompous form of expression common with the Hebrew writers¹:

“ He shall call the heavens from on high ;
“ And the earth to the judgment of his people.”

At length the Almighty is personally introduced pronouncing his sentence, which constitutes the remainder of the ode ; and the admirable sublimity and splendour of the exordium is continued through the whole. There is in Horace an ode upon a similar subject², and it is not enough to say, that he has treated it in his usual manner, with elegance and variety, for he has done more than could be expected from a person unenlightened by divine truth, he has treated it with piety and solemnity. But that high degree of sublimity, to which the Psalmist rises upon such occasions, is only to be attained by the Hebrew Muse ; for it is a truth universally acknowledged, that no religion whatever, no poetic history is provided with a store of imagery so striking and so magni-

¹ Compare DEUT. xxxii. 1. ISA. i. 2.

² See HORAT. Lib. iii. Od. xxiii.

ficent,

ficent, so capable of embellishing a scene, which may be justly accounted the most sublime that the human imagination is able to comprehend.

The next example, which I shall produce, will be found in some measure different from the former, inasmuch as the subject itself is possessed of the highest dignity and splendour, though still no inconsiderable part of the sublimity is to be attributed to the general plan and arrangement of the poem. The induction of the ark of God to mount Sion by David, gave occasion to the twenty-fourth Psalm³. The removal of the ark was celebrated in a great assembly of the people, and with suitable splendour during every part of the ceremony. The Levites led the procession, accompanied by a great variety of vocal and instrumental music; and this Ode appears to have been sung to the people when they arrived at the summit of the mountain. The exordium is expressive of the supreme and infinite dominion of God, arising from the right of creation :

³ See 2 SAM. vi. 1 CHRON. xv.

" The earth is JEHOVAH's, and the fulness thereof;
 " The world and all that inhabit therein.
 " For upon the seas hath he founded it,
 " And upon the floods hath he established it."

How astonishing the favour and condescension! how extraordinary the testimony of his love, when he selected from his infinite dominion a peculiar seat, and a people for himself! What a copious return of gratitude, of holiness, of righteousness, and of all human virtues, does such an obligation demand! " Behold," says Moses, addressing the Israelites, " The heaven, and the heaven of heavens, is JEHOVAH's, thy God, the earth also, and all that it containeth. Only he had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and their posterity after them, and he chose you above all people as it is this day *." Such is evidently the reasoning of David in the following passage, though the chain of argument is not quite so directly displayed:

" Who shall ascend unto the mountain of JE-
 " HOVAH;
 " And who shall stand in the seat of his holiness?

* DEUT. X. 14—16.

" He

" He whose hands are innocent, and whose heart
" is pure:

" Who hath not put his trust in vanity⁵,

" Nor sworn for the purpose of deceit.

" He shall receive a blessing from JEHOVAH,

" And righteousness from the God of his salva-
" tion.

" This is the generation that seeketh him;

" That seeketh the face of the God of Jacob⁶."

Thus

⁵ נִשְׂא נַפְשׁוֹ, this phrase denotes confidence, hope, de-
fire. See Ps. xxv. 1. lxxxvi. 4. cxliii. 8. also DEUT.
xxiv. 15. JER. xxii. 27. EZEK. xxiv. 25. שׂוּא, an idol:
לְשׂוּא יִקְטֹר, " burn incense to vain gods." JER. xviii. 15.

Author's Note.

" Who have not sworn falsely by their life. "I offer this
translation in preference to our author's, " Who hath
" not put his trust in vanity, or in vain gods," on the
authority of M. MICHAELIS; who justly observes, that the
translation of the words *nasa lesheva* is to *perjure* or *for-
swear*, and not to *swear by false gods*, as is evident from
EXOD. xx. 7. and it is properly applied to the naming in
a lie the name of JEHOVAH, their *own life*, or the *sacred
cities*, (Ps. cxxx. 20.) or any other thing which was ac-
counted sacred or dear to them. T.

⁶ It ought to be read either with the LXX. VULG.
ARAB. ÆTHIOP. פָּנֵי אֱלֹהִים; or with the SYR. פָּנֵי אֱלֹהִים, *pani elohim*,
which is much the same. " It is פָּנֵי אֱלֹהִים יִקְטֹר in a MS.
" in possession of EBNER ESCHENBACH, Norimberg.
" See NADLERI *Dissertat. de EBNERI Codicibus MStis.*
" 1748." K. The *holy ark*, and the *shcinah* which re-
mained upon it, the symbol of the divine presence, is
called

Thus far is expressive, on the one hand, of the infinite goodness and condescension of God to the children of Israel; and on the other hand, of their indispensable obligation to piety and virtue; since he had deigned to make their nation the peculiar seat of his miraculous providence, and to honour them with his actual presence. We may now conceive the procession to have arrived at the gates of the tabernacle. While the ark is brought in, the Levites, divided into two choirs, sing alternately the remainder of the Psalm. Indeed, it is not impossible that this

called the *face of God*: and to seek the face of God, is to appear before the ark, to worship at the sanctuary of God; which was required of the Israelites thrice a year. See 2 SAM. xxi. 1. 2 CHRON. vii. 14. Ps. xxvii. 8. EXOD. xxiii. 17.

“ Seek JEHOVAH and his strength,

“ Seek his face for ever.”

Ps. cv. 4.

Where it is worthy of remark, that *נצח* (his strength) is parallel and synonymous to *פניו* (his face) and signifies the ark of God: compare Ps. lxxviii. 61. cxxxii. 8. They but trifle, who endeavour to extort any thing reasonable from the common reading. Further, I am of opinion, that in ver. 9th the verb *נצח* in *Niphal* ought to be repeated: so all the old translators seem to have read it.

Author's Note.

mode of singing was pursued through every part of the Ode; but towards the conclusion the fact will not admit of a doubt. On the whole, whether we regard the subject, the imagery, or style of this composition, it will be found to possess a certain simple and unaffected (and therefore admirable) sublimity:

- “ Lift up your heads, O ye gates!
 “ And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors!⁷
 “ And the King of Glory shall enter.
 “ Who is this King of Glory?
 “ JEHOVAH mighty and powerful,
 “ JEHOVAH powerful in war.
 “ Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
 “ And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors!
 “ And the King of Glory shall enter.
 “ Who is this King of Glory?
 “ JEHOVAH of hosts, he is the King of Glory.”

You will easily perceive, that the beauty and sublimity observable in this Psalm are

⁷ I would prefer *ye ancient gates*, that is, *long since enabled* by the worship of the true God. Thus Jacob and Moses speak of the *ancient mountains*, the *everlasting hills*, &c. The meaning of the verse is, “The gates, which
 “ were mean and contracted before, and unworthy of
 “ JEHOVAH, should now be extended and enlarged.” M.
 of

of such a peculiar kind as to be perfectly adapted to the subject and the occasion, and to that particular solemnity for which it was composed. You will perceive too, that unless we have some respect to these points, the principal force and elegance will be lost; and even the propriety of the sentiments, the splendour of the diction, the beauty and order of the arrangement, will be almost totally obscured. If such be the state of the case in this single instance, it is surely not unreasonable to conclude, that it is not the only one which stands in need of the light of history to cast a splendour on its beauties. It is surely not unreasonable to infer, that much of the harmony, propriety, and elegance of the sacred poetry must pass unperceived by us, who can only form distant conjectures of the general design, but are totally ignorant of the particular application^s. Thus of necessity much of the delicacy

^s I wish most earnestly, that this observation of our author might be properly attended to by the commentators upon the Psalms: since whoever neglects it must of necessity fall into very gross errors. There are some who, attempting to explain the Psalms from the historical parts

licacy of sentiment, much of the felicity of allusion, and the force of expression, must, by

of Scripture, act as if every occurrence were known to them, and as if nothing had happened during the reign of David which was not committed to writing. This, however, considering the extreme brevity of the Sacred History, and the number and magnitude of the facts which it relates, must of course be very far from the truth. The causes and motives of many wars are not at all adverted to, the battles that are related are few, and those the principal. Who can doubt, though ever so unexperienced in military affairs, that many things occurred, which are not mentioned, between the desertion of Jerusalem by David, and that famous battle, which extinguished the rebellion of Absalom? The camp must have been frequently removed, as circumstances varied, to places of greater safety; much trouble must have been had in collecting the veteran soldiers from different posts, and not a few battles and skirmishes must have occurred, before the exiled king could so far presume upon the strength and increase of his army as to quit the mountains, and try the open field. This last battle being fought on this side Jordan, in the forest of Ephraim, is it not natural to suppose, that something must have occurred to compel Absalom, whose camp was beyond Jordan, to return into Palestine, properly so called: possibly the preservation of the royal city? Or is it possible to compare the history of 2 SAM. viii. 13. with Ps. lx. and not to perceive, that some unfortunate events must have happened previous to the victories over the Syrians and Idumeans, and that affairs must have been unhappily situated in Palestine itself; that even the royal city

by the hand of time, be cast into shade; or rather I should say, totally suppressed and extin-

city must have been in danger; since the Idumeans penetrated even so far as the valley of Salt, which is scarcely distant one day's journey. If all these things be omitted; if, moreover, in the book of Samuel no sufficiently express mention is made of the Assyrians, with whom David certainly waged war, Ps. lxxxiii. 9. why should we not suppose that many lesser facts are omitted in the history, to which however a poet might allude, as natural and proper matter of amplification? But to return to the point I set out from, those who will not allow themselves to be ignorant of a great part of the Jewish history, will be apt to explain more of the Psalms upon the same principle, and as relating to the same facts, than they ought: whence the poetry will appear tame and languid, abounding in words, but with little variety of description or sentiment.

There are commentators of another class, who take inexcuseable liberties of invention, and instead of resorting to the records of the ancients, endeavour to supply facts from their own ingenuity: in which way some of the biographers of David have greatly indulged themselves, and particularly DELANY. For example, in the 7th Chap. of the 3d Vol. he takes it for granted, from Ps. xxxviii. and xli. that at the time when Absalom formed the rebellion, David was ill of the small-pox (a disease which we cannot pretend to assert from any historical proof to have been known at that period, and from which the king at his time of life could scarcely have recovered) and to shew that nothing could exceed

extinguished. The attentive reader will, indeed, frequently feel a want of information, concerning the author, the age, and the occasion of a poem; still more frequently will he find occasion to lament his own ignorance with respect to many facts and circumstances closely connected with the principal subject, and on which, perhaps, its most striking ornaments depend. This we experience in some degree in the admirable poem of Deborah; and this I seem to experience in the sixty-eighth Psalm, though it appears to have some affinity with the subject of that which we have just examined, since it adopts, in the place of an exordium, that well-known form of expression which was commonly made use of on the removal of the ark⁹:

his rashness in inventing, he adds, that by means of the disease he lost the use of his right eye for some time.

Others have recourse to mystical interpretations, or those historical passages which they do not understand they convert into prophecies: into none of these errors would mankind have fallen, but through the persuasion, that the whole history of the Jews was minutely detailed to them; and that there were no circumstances with which they were unacquainted. M.

⁹ Compare NUM. x. 35.

“ Let

“ Let God arise ; let his enemies be scattered ;
 “ And let those that hate him flee from his pre-
 , “ sence.”

But almost every part of this most noble poem is involved in an impenetrable darkness. It would otherwise have afforded a singular example of the true sublime ; the scattered rays of which, breaking forth with difficulty through the thick clouds that surround it, we yet behold with a mixture of admiration and pleasure ¹⁰.

The most perfect example that I know of the other species of the sublime ode, which I pointed out (that I mean which possesses a sublimity dependant wholly upon the greatness of the conceptions, and the dignity of the language, without any peculiar excellence in the form and arrangement) is the thanksgiving ode of Moses, composed after passing the Red Sea ¹¹. Through every part of this poem the most perfect plainness and

¹⁰ Having professed above, that I admired not so much the sublimity as the sweetness of David's Lyric Poetry, I think it my duty to make an exception in favour of this Psalm, than which I do not recollect any thing more sublime in the whole book of Psalms. M.

¹¹ EXOD. xv.

simplicity is maintained; there is nothing artificial, nothing laboured, either in respect to method or invention. Every part of it breathes the spirit of nature and of passion: joy, admiration, and love, united with piety and devotion, burst forth spontaneously in their native colours. A miracle of the most interesting nature to the Israelites is displayed. The sea divides, and the waters are raised into vast heaps on either side, while they pass over; but their enemies, in attempting to pursue, are overwhelmed by the reflux of the waves. These circumstances are all expressed in language suitable to the emotions which they produced, abrupt, fervid, concise, animated, with a frequent repetition of the same sentiments:

“ I will sing to JEHOVAH, for he is very highly
“ exalted;
“ The horse and the rider he hath o’erwhelmed
“ in the sea.”

This constitutes the proem of the ode, and is also repeated occasionally by the female part of the band in the manner of a modern chorus, being briefly expressive of the general subject. The same idea, however, occurs

curs in several parts of the poem, with considerable variation in the language and figures :

“ The chariots of Pharoah and his forces he cast
“ into the sea ;

“ And his chosen leaders were drowned in the
“ Red Sea.

“ The depths have covered them ;

“ They went down into the abyfs as a stone.”

And again :

“ The enemy said, I will pursue, I will over-
“ take ;

“ I will divide the spoil, my soul shall be satis-
“ fied” ;

“ I will draw the sword, my hand shall destroy
“ them.

“ Thou didst blow with thy breath ; the sea co-
“ vered them :

“ They sunk like lead in the great waters.”

Nor do even these repetitions satisfy the author :

“ Who is like unto thee among the gods, O
“ JEHOVAH !

“ Who is like unto thee, glorious in sanctity !

¹² “ This is explained by one of the Rabbinical
“ writers, *It will be filled from them ;* that is, says ano-
“ ther, *by taking their wealth or substance.*” H.

“ Fearful

“ Fearful in praises, performing miracles !
“ Thou extendedst thy right-hand, the earth
“ swallowed them.”

In these examples is displayed all the genuine force of nature and passion, which the efforts of art will emulate in vain. Here we behold the passions struggling for vent, labouring with a copiousness of thought and a poverty of expression, and on that very account the more expressly displayed. To take a strict account of the sublimity of this ode, would be to repeat the whole. I will only remark one quality, which is indeed congenial to all the poetry of the Hebrews, but in this poem is more than usually predominant, I mean that brevity of diction which is so conducive to sublimity of style. Diffuse and exuberant expression generally detracts from the force of the sentiment ; as in the human body, excessive corpulency is generally inconsistent with health and vigour. The Hebrews, if we contemplate any of their compositions as a whole, may be deemed full and copious ; but if we consider only the constituent parts of any production, they will be found sparing in words, concise and energetic.

getic. They amplify by diversifying, by repeating, and sometimes by adding to the subject; therefore it happens, that it is frequently, on the whole, treated rather diffusely; but still every particular sentence is concise and nervous in itself. Thus it happens in general, that neither copiousness nor vigour is wanting. This brevity of style is in some measure to be attributed to the genius of the language, and in some measure to the nature of the Hebrew verse. The most literal versions therefore commonly fail in this respect, and consequently still less is to be expected from any poetical translations or imitations whatever.

Most of those qualities and perfections, which have been the subject of this disquisition, will be found in a very high degree in the twenty-ninth Psalm. The supreme dominion of God, and the awfulness of his power, are demonstrated from the tremendous noise, and the astonishing force of the thunder, which the Hebrews, by a bold but very apt figure, denominate "the voice of the Most High." It is enough to say of it, that the sublimity of the matter is perfectly equalled by the unaffected energy of the style.

PSALM

P S A L M XXIX.

“ Sing, ye sons of might, O sing
“ Praise to heaven’s eternal King ;
“ Power and strength to him assign,
“ And before his hallow’d shrine
“ Yield the homage, that his name
“ From a creature’s lips may claim.
“ Hark ! his voice in thunder breaks ;
“ Hush’d to silence, while he speaks,
“ Ocean’s waves from pole to pole
“ Hear the awful accents roll :
“ See, as louder yet they rise,
“ Echoing through the vaulted skies,
“ Loftiest cedars lie o’erthrown,
“ Cedars of steep Lebanon.
“ See, uprooted from its seat,
“ Trembling at the threat divine,
“ Lebanon itself retreat ;
“ And Sirion haste its flight to join !
“ See them like the heifer borne,
“ Like the beast whose pointed horn
“ Strikes with dread the sylvan train,
“ Bound impetuous on the plain.
“ Now the bursting clouds give way,
“ And the vivid lightnings play ;
“ And the wilds by man untrod
“ Hear, dismay’d, th’ approaching God.
“ Cades ! o’er thy lonely waste,
“ Oft the dreadful sounds have past :
“ Oft

" Oft his stroke the wood invades :
 " Widow'd of their branchy shades
 " Mightiest oaks its fury know " ;
 " While the pregnant hind her throe
 " Instant feels, and on the earth
 " Trembling drops th' unfinish'd birth.

" *The oaks are affected with pain, or tremble :* אֵילָה or אֵילִים is an oak : and certainly this word frequently occurs in the plural masculine, with the insertion of י. And in this sense the SYR. has taken it, who renders it רִמְיֵי אֵילָה. For the word רָמַע in Syriac, as well as Hebrew, denotes motion or agitation of any kind ; nor is its meaning confined to the pains of childbirth. See ISA. li. 9. " This explanation of the word יָחַל in the sense of *moving* or *shaking*, is established beyond a doubt upon the authority of the Arabic verb הָוָה, to *move* or *shake*." H. Though the word אֵילָה does not appear in the Syriac Lexicons to signify an oak, yet it occurs four times in this sense in the Syriac version, exactly answering to the Hebrew word אֵילָה, 2 SAM. xviii. 9, 10, 14. as also in this place. The common translations suppose this passage to relate to the *hinds bringing forth young* : which agrees very little with the rest of the imagery either in nature or dignity : nor do I feel myself persuaded, even by the reasonings of the learned Bochart on this subject, Hieroz. part i. lib. iii. chap. 17. Whereas the oak struck with lightning admirably agrees with the context. And Bochart himself explains the word אֵילָה (which has been absurdly understood by the Masorites and other commentators as relating to a stag) as spoken of a tree in a very beautiful explication of an obscure passage in GEN. xlix. 21. *Author's Note.*

" Prostrate

- " Prostrate on the sacred floor
" Israel's sons his name adore,
" While his acts to every tongue
" Yields its argument of song.
" He the swelling surge commands;
" Fix'd his throne for ever stands;
" He his people shall increase,
" Arm with strength, and bless with peace."

L E C T U R E XXVIII.

THE SUBLIME STYLE OF THE HEBREW ODE.

The sublime Ode, in which all the constituents of sublimity formerly specified are united.—The prophetic Ode of Moses, DEUT. xxxii.—The triumphal Ode of Deborah; the Prayer of Habakkuk; the Fate of Tyranny, being a poetical imitation of the xivth chapter of Isaiah.

BEFORE we conclude this disquisition concerning the Lyric Poetry of the Hebrews, it will be proper to produce a few specimens of that kind of ode, which derives sublimity from several united causes, from the diction, the sentiments, the form and conduct of the poem; and which accumulates, or in a manner condenses and combines all the beauties and elegancies of this style of composition. The poems to which I shall refer on this occasion, are too well known to require a minute explanation, and indeed almost too noble and perspicuous in themselves to admit of any illustration from criticism; it will therefore be sufficient to notice them in general terms, or, at most,

briefly to recommend a few passages, which are perhaps so eminently beautiful as to deserve particular attention.

The first instance I shall mention is that prophetic ode of Moses¹, which contains a justification on the part of God against the Israelites, and an explanation of the nature and design of the divine judgments. The exordium is singularly magnificent; the plan and conduct of the poem is just, natural, and well accommodated to the subject, for it is almost in the order of an historical narration. It embraces a variety of the sublimest subjects and sentiments, it displays the truth and justice of God, his paternal love, and his unfailing tenderness to his chosen people; and on the other hand, their ungrateful and contumacious spirit. The ardour of the divine indignation, and the heavy denunciations of vengeance, are afterwards expressed in a remarkable personification, which is scarcely to be paralleled from all the choicest treasures of the Muses. The fervour of wrath is however tempered with the milder beams of lenity and mercy, and ends at last

¹ DEUT. xxxii.

in promises and consolation. When I formerly treated of elevation of sentiment, of the impulse of the passions, of the force of imagery and diction, I could scarcely have avoided touching upon this poem, and drawing some of my examples from it². Not to repeat these, or accumulate unnecessary matter, I will only add one remark, namely, that the subject and style of this poem bear so exact a resemblance to the prophetic as well as the Lyric compositions of the Hebrews, that it unites all the force, energy, and boldness of the latter, with the exquisite variety and grandeur of imagery so peculiar to the former³.

Another specimen of the perfectly sublime Ode will be found in the triumphal Ode of Deborah⁴. This Poem consists of three parts: first, the exordium; next, a recital of the circumstances which preceded, and of those which accompanied the victory; lastly, a fuller description of the concluding event, the death of Sisera, and the disappointed hopes of his mother, which is embellished

² See LECT. xv.

⁴ See LECT. xiii.

³ JUD. v.

with all the choicest flowers of poetry. Of this latter part, I endeavoured to explain at large the principal beauties in a former lecture. About the middle of the poem, it must be confessed, some obscurities occur, and those not of a trivial nature, which impair the beauty of the composition; and what is worse, I fear they will scarcely admit of elucidation, unless we were possessed of some further historical lights. The exordium deserves a particular examination, as well for its native magnificence and sublimity, as because it will serve more completely to illustrate my remarks concerning the digressions of the Hebrew Ode. I observed, that the principal passages in the Sacred History, which in general constitute the materials of these digressions, are so connected with every subject of Sacred Poetry, that even in the most excentric excursions of the imagination, there is little danger of wandering from the main scope and design. The subject of this Ode is the triumph of the Israelites over their enemies through the divine assistance, and the establishment of their liberty. At the very opening of the poem this is proposed as the ground-work of it: and

and after inviting the kings and princes of the neighbouring nations to attend to this miracle of the divine goodness, the author proceeds to celebrate the praise of God, not commencing with the benefit so recently received, but with the prodigies formerly exhibited in Egypt :

“ O JEHOVAH, when thou wentest forth out of

“ Seir,

“ When thou proceededst from the plains of

“ Edom ;

“ The earth was moved, the heavens dropped,

“ The clouds also dropped water ;

“ The mountains melted from before the face of

“ JEHOVAH,

“ Sinah itself from before JEHOVAH, the God of

“ Israel.”

The sudden introduction of such important incidents, breathes the free and fervid spirit of the Lyric Muse. There is however no defect in the connexion, nor does any degree of obscurity attend the comparison which is implied between that stupendous deliverance and the benefit so lately received.

On the same principle the prayer of Habakkuk is constructed^s ; and is a remarkable

^s HABAK. iii.

instance of that sublimity peculiar to the ode, and which is often the result of a bold but natural digression. The Prophet foreseeing the judgment of God, and the impending calamities, which were to be inflicted upon his nation by the hands of the Chaldeans, as well as the punishments, which the latter were themselves to undergo; partly struck with terror, partly cheered with hope, he beseeches Almighty God to hasten the redemption of his people :

“ O JEHOVAH, I have heard thy speech,
 “ I have feared, O JEHOVAH, thy work.
 “ As the years⁶ approach, thou hast shewn it :
 “ And in thy wrath hast remembered mercy.”

In this passage, the resemblance between the Babylonish and Egyptian captivities naturally presents itself to the mind, as well as the possibility of a similar deliverance through the power and assistance of God. With how much propriety, therefore, might the Prophet have continued his supplications to that

⁶ See the VULG. and THEODOTION, *ἐν μισῶ ἔτι* AQUILA and the LXX. *ἐν τῷ ἐγγίζειν τὰ ἔτη* SYMMACHUS, *ἐν τῷ ἐγγίζειν τὰ ἔτη*. All of them almost in the same sense, that is, “ within a fixed time.”

all-powerful and all-merciful God; that, as he had formerly wrought so many miracles in favour of his people, he would afford them relief and consolation on the present occasion; and how efficacious a method would it have been, to confirm the fortitude of every pious person, to remind them, that he who had formerly manifested his infinite power in delivering the Israelites from their great afflictions, might, in proper time, employ the same means to rescue them from their present state of suffering? He however totally disregards the formality of this method, probably because he supposed all the above ideas would spontaneously occur to the reader; nor does he labour for access by slow and regular approaches to the sacred depository of the most splendid materials, but bursts into it at once, and by a sort of unexpected impulse:

“ God came from Teman,

“ And the Holy One from mount Paran :

“ His glory covered the heavens ;

“ And the earth was full of his praise.”

The Prophet, indeed, illustrates this subject throughout with equal magnificence ; select-

ing from such an assemblage of miraculous incidents, the most noble and important, displaying them in the most splendid colours, and embellishing them with the sublimest imagery, figures, and diction, the dignity of which is so heightened and recommended by the superior elegance of the conclusion, that were it not for a few shades, which the hand of time has apparently cast over it in two or three passages, no composition of the kind would, I believe, appear more elegant or more perfect than this poem.

I will add one remarkable example more of the perfectly sublime ode, which indeed it would be utterly unpardonable to overlook; I mean, the triumphal song of the Israelites on the destruction of Babylon. It is almost unnecessary to add, that it is in no respect unworthy of Isaiah, whom I cannot help esteeming the first of poets, as well for elegance as sublimity. Having formerly taken up a considerable portion of your time and attention in a minute investigation of its beauties, it is now presented in the modern form of a Lyric composition.

I

THE

ON THE FATE OF TYRANNY, ISAIAH XIV.

- " Oppression dies: the Tyrant falls;
 " The golden City bows her walls!
 " JEHOVAH breaks th' Avenger's rod.
 " The Son of Wrath, whose ruthless hand
 " Hurl'd Desolation o'er the land,
 " Has run his raging race, has clos'd the scene of
 " blood.
 " Chiefs arm'd around behold their vanquish'd
 " Lord;
 " Nor spread the guardian shield, nor lift the
 " loyal sword.
 " He falls; and Earth again is free.
 " Hark! at the call of Liberty,
 " All Nature lifts the choral song.
 " The Fir-trees, on the mountain's head,
 " Rejoice thro' all their pomp of shade;
 " The lordly Cedars nod on sacred Lebanon:
 " Tyrant! they cry, since thy fell force is
 " broke,
 " Our proud heads pierce the skies, nor fear the
 " woodman's stroke.
 " Hell, from her gulph profound,
 " Rouses at thine approach; and, all around,
 " Her dreadful notes of preparation found,
 " See, at the awful call,
 " Her shadowy Heroes all,

“ Ev’n mighty Kings, the heirs of empire wide,
“ Rising, with solemn state, and slow,
“ From their fable thrones below,
“ Meet, and insult thy pride.
“ What, dost thou join our ghostly train,
“ A flitting shadow light, and vain?
“ Where is thy pomp, thy festive throng,
“ Thy revel dance, and wanton song?
“ Proud King! Corruption fastens on thy breast;
“ And calls her crawling brood, and bids them
“ share the feast.

“ Oh Lucifer! thou radiant star;
“ Son of the Morn; whose rosy car
“ Flam’d foremost in the van of day:
“ How art thou fall’n, thou King of Light!
“ How fall’n from thy meridian height!
“ Who said’st the distant poles shall hear me,
“ and obey.
“ High, o’er the stars, my sapphire throne
“ shall glow,
“ And, as JEHOVAH’S self, my voice the heav’ns
“ shall bow.

“ He spake, he died. Distain’d with gore,
“ Beside yon yawning cavern hoar,
“ See, where his livid corse is laid.
“ The aged Pilgrim passing by,
“ Surveys him long with dubious eye;
“ And muses on his fate, and shakes his reverend
“ head.

“ Just

“ Just heav’ns! is thus thy pride imperial
“ gone?

“ Is this poor heap of dust the King of Babylon?

“ Is this the Man, whose nod

“ Made the Earth tremble: whose terrific rod

“ Levell’d her loftiest cities? Where He trod,

“ Famine pursu’d, and frown’d;

“ ’Till Nature groaning round,

“ Saw her rich realms transform’d to deserts
“ dry;

“ While at his crouded prison’s gate;

“ Grasping the keys of Fate,

“ Stood stern Captivity.

“ Vain Man! behold thy righteous doom;

“ Behold each neighb’ring monarch’s tomb;

“ The trophied arch, the breathing bust,

“ The laurel shades their sacred dust;

“ While thou, vile Out-cast, on this hostile plain,

“ Moulder’st, a vulgar corse, among the vulgar
“ slain.

“ No trophied arch, no breathing bust,

“ Shall dignify thy trampled dust:

“ No laurel flourish o’er thy grave.

“ For why, proud King, thy ruthless hand

“ Hurl’d Desolation o’er the land,

“ And crush’d the subject race, whom kings are
“ born to save:

“ Eternal

" Eternal Infamy shall blast thy name,
 " And all thy sons shall share their impious Fa-
 " ther's shame.

" Rise, purple Slaughter ! furious rise ;
 " Unfold the terror of thine eyes ;
 " Dart thy vindictive shafts around :
 " Let no strange land a shade afford,
 " No conquer'd Nations call them Lord ;
 " Nor let their cities rise to curse the goodly
 " ground.

" For thus JEHOVAH swears; no Name, no Son,
 " No remnant, shall remain of haughty Babylon.

" Thus saith the righteous Lord :
 " My Vengeance shall unsheath the flaming sword ;
 " O'er all thy realms my Fury shall be pour'd.
 " Where yon proud city stood,
 " I'll spread the stagnant flood ;
 " And there the Bittern in the sedge shall lurk,
 " Moaning with fullen strain :
 " While, sweeping o'er the plain,
 " Destruction ends her work.

" Yes, on mine holy mountain's brow,
 " I'll crush this proud Assyrian foe.
 " Th' irrevocable word is spoke.
 " From Judah's neck the galling yoke
 " Spontaneous falls, she shines with wonted state ;
 " Thus by MYSELF I swear, and what I swear is
 " Fate ?."

7 Mr. POTTER has favoured the world with a very ele-
 gant and spirited paraphrase of this prophetic Ode. His
 description

description of the reception of the king of Babylon in the infernal regions is particularly striking :

- " To meet thee, Hades rouses from beneath,
 " An iron smile his visage wears ;
 " He calls through all the drear abodes of death ;
 " His call each mighty chieftain hears ;
 " And scepter'd kings, of empires wide,
 " Rise from their lofty thrones, and thus accost thy pride.
 " Is this weak form of flitting air
 " The potent Lord that fill'd th' Assyrian throne ?
 " Thus are thy wonted glories gone ?
 " Where thy rich feasts, thy sprightly viols where ?
 " Beneath thee is corruption spread,
 " And worms the covering of thy bed ?
 " How art thou fall'n, bright star of orient day,
 " How fall'n from thy ethereal height,
 " Son of the morning ! Thou, whose sanguine ray
 " Glar'd terribly a baleful light ;
 " War kindled at the blaze, and wild
 " Rush'd Slaughter, Havoc rush'd, their robes with blood
 " defiled.
 " *I in high heaven will be ador'd,*
 " *Above the stars of God exalt my throne ;*
 " *My power shall sacred Sion own,*
 " *The mount of God's high presence hail me Lord.*
 " Such thy vain threats : Death's dark abode
 " Yawns to receive the vaunting god."

The expostulation of the travellers, who find the body exposed, is also expressed in terms truly magnificent :

- " Is this the man, whose barb'rous hate
 " Bound captive monarchs in his galling chain ;
 " While Outrage call'd his loit'ring train,
 " And Rigour clos'd the dungeon's ruthless gate ?
 " How

"How from his high dominion hurl'd
"The spoiler of the ravag'd world!"

"Shalt thou with honour'd chiefs repose?
"Her jaws 'gainst thee the Grave shall close;
"For where portentous thy proud banners wav'd,
"Rapine rush'd o'er the wasted land:
"Thy country too, her free-born sons enslav'd,
"Or slaughter'd, curs'd thy hostile hand."

I close these extracts with the denunciation of **JEHOVAH**
against the Assyrians:

"Dreadful on Sion's sacred brow
"The God of armies shall they know.
"Daughter of Sion, let thy joy arise,
"From thy griev'd neck his yoke shall fall;
"Virgin exult, thy haughty foe despise,
"His chain no more thy arms shall gall!"

OF THE IDYLLIUM OR HYMN.

LECTURE XXIX.

OF THE IDYLLIUM OF THE HEBREWS.

Besides those poems which may be strictly termed odes, the general appellation, which in the Hebrew is equivalent to Canticle or Song, includes another species called by the Greeks, the Idyllium.—The reason of this name, and the definition of the poem to which it is appropriated.—The historical Psalms in general belong properly to this class.—The intercalary stanza and the nature of it.—The elegant plan and arrangement of the hundred and seventh Psalm explained: also the ixth chapter of Isaiah, ver. 8. to chap. x. ver. 4.—This passage a perfect specimen of the Idyllium: other examples of the Idyllium no less perfect as to style and form.—The Hymn of Cleanthes the stoic commended.—The cxxxixth Psalm in English verse.

AMONGST those poems which by the Hebrews were adapted to music, and distinguished by the general appellation *Shirim*, there are some which differ in their nature from lyric poetry, strictly so called. It will therefore be more regular to class them with those compositions anciently termed Idylliums, the name and nature of which I shall endeavour to explain.

Whether

Whether we are to attribute the invention of the name to the poets themselves, or to the grammarians who revised their works, is difficult to say; but we find some of the Greek poems distinguished by the title *Eidê*, which denotes a poem without any certain limitation as to form or subject. Even the odes of Pindar retain that appellation. But if there were any upon lighter subjects, or in a more humble strain, indeed in any respect of an inferior kind, and such as could not be classed under any of the common divisions, they were entitled *Eidyllia*. Thus the small poems of Theocritus, which consist chiefly of Bucolicks, intermingled with others of different kinds, are called Idylliums. In the same manner the Latins preferred the name of *Eclogues*, or poems selected from a number of others; and for a contrary and more modest reason, that of *sylvæ* (or *woods*) was given to such verses as were hastily composed, and promiscuously thrown together, such as might afford matter for a more accurate revision or for a similar selection. But although the term Idyllium be a vague and general term, which denotes nothing certain relating to the nature of the poem, it still
appears

appears by use and custom to have obtained a certain and appropriated destination; and perhaps it may not be improperly defined, a poem of moderate length; of a uniform, middle style, chiefly distinguished for elegance and sweetness; regular and clear as to plot, conduct, and arrangement. There are many perfect examples of this kind of poem extant in the writings of the Hebrews; some of which, I presume, it will not be unpleasing singly to point out and explain.

The first of these poems which attract our notice are the historical Psalms, in celebration of the power and the other attributes of the Deity, as instanced in the miracles which he performed in favour of his people. One of the principal of these, bearing the name of Asaph^a, pursues the history of the Israelites from the time of their departure from Egypt to the reign of David, particularizing and illustrating all the leading events. The style is simple and uniform, but the structure is poetical, and the sentiments occasionally splendid. — The historical, or rather chronological order, cannot be said to

^a Ps. lxxviii.

to be exactly preserved throughout; for the minute detail of so protracted a series of events could scarcely fail to tire in a work of imagination. The Egyptian miracles are introduced in a very happy and elegant digression, and may be considered as forming a kind of episode. The same subject affords materials for two other Psalms, the hundred and fifth, and the hundred and sixth: the one including the history of Israel, from the call of Abraham to the Exodus; the other, from that period to the later ages of the commonwealth: both of them bear a strong resemblance to the seventy-eighth, as well in the subject as in the style (except perhaps that the diction is rather of a more simple cast); the mixture of ease and grace, displayed in the exordium, is the same in all.

These Psalms, both in plot and conduct, have a surprizing analogy to the Hymns of the Greeks. Indeed the Greek translators might very properly have given the title of HYMNS to the book of Psalms, as that word agrees much more exactly with the Hebrew title *Tebillim*, than that which they have adopted. This species of poetry was
very

very early in use among the Greeks, and was almost entirely appropriated to the celebration of their religious rites. The subjects in general were the origin of the Gods, the places of their birth, their achievements, and the other circumstances of their history. Such are all the poems of this kind now extant in the Greek; such are the elegant hymns of Calimachus, as well as those which are attributed to Homer. The poem of Theocritus, entitled the *DIOSKOUROI*, or the praise of Castor and Pollux, is also a genuine hymn, and very elegant in its kind: nor is it improperly classed among the Idylliums, which may be said to include all of this species. But the true form and character of the Hymn is excellently expressed by the two choirs of *Salii* (or priests of war) in Virgil:

“ One choir of old, another of the young;
 “ To dance, and bear the burthen of the song;
 “ The lay records the labours and the praise,
 “ And all th’ immortal acts of Hercules ^a.”

Those ancient hymns, which are falsely attributed to Orpheus, are more properly ini-

^a DRYD. VIRG. *ÆNEID.* viii. 379.

tiatory Songs ; for they contain “ little more
 “ than invocations of the Gods, which were
 “ made use of by those who were initiated
 “ in the sacred mysteries of any of the
 “ Gods’.” Ovid, who was both an elegant and a learned poet, united the excellencies of both these species of Hymns : for the exordium of the Hymn to Bacchus contains the invocations of that God, or in other words, announces solemnly his name and titles ; the remainder celebrates his perfections and achievements ⁴.

There is yet another Psalm, which may be enumerated among those of the historical kind, namely, the hundred and thirty-sixth. It celebrates the praises of the Almighty, and proclaims his infinite power and goodness ; beginning with the work of creation, and proceeding to the miracles of the Exodus, the principal of which are related almost in the historical order. The exordium commences with this well-known distich :

“ Glorify JEHOVAH, for he is good ;
 “ For his mercy endureth for ever :”

³ JOS. SCALIGER. Annot. in Hym. Orph.

⁴ METAMORPH. IV. EL.

which,

which, according to Ezra^s, was commonly sung by alternate choirs. There is, however, one circumstance remarkable attending it, which is, that the latter line of the distich, being added by the second choir, and also subjoined to every verse (which is a singular case) forms a perpetual Epode. Hence the whole nature and form of the intercalary verse, or (burthen of the Song) may be collected: it expresses in a clear, concise, and simple manner, some particular sentiment, which seems to include virtually the general subject or design of the poem; and it is thrown in at proper intervals, according to the nature and arrangement of it, for the sake of impressing the subject more firmly upon the mind. That the intercalary verse is perfectly congenial to the Idyllium, is evident from the authority of Theocritus, Bion, Moschus, and even of Virgil. I shall add one or two examples from the Sacred Poetry, which will not lose in a comparison with the most perfect specimens in this department of poetry, which those excellent writers have bequeathed to posterity: and

^s EZR. iii. 10, 11.

in order to illustrate as well the elegance of the poem in general, as the peculiar force and beauty of the intercalary verse, the order and conduct of the subject must be particularly explained.

The hundred and seventh Psalm may undoubtedly be enumerated among the most elegant monuments of antiquity; and it is chiefly indebted for its elegance to the general plan and conduct of the poem. It celebrates the goodness and mercy of God towards mankind, as demonstrated in the immediate assistance and comfort which he affords, in the greatest calamities, to those who devoutly implore his aid. In the first place, to those who wander in the desert, and who encounter the horrors of famine; next, to those who are in bondage; to those who are afflicted with disease; and finally, to those who are tossed about upon the ocean. The prolixity of the argument is occasionally relieved by narration; and examples are super-added of the divine severity in punishing the wicked, as well as of his benignity to the devout and virtuous; and both the narrative and preceptive parts are recommended to the earnest contemplation of considerate minds.

Thus the whole poem actually divides into five parts nearly equal; the four first of which conclude with an intercalary verse, expressive of the subject or design of the hymn :

“ Glorify JEHOVAH for his mercy,
“ And for his wonders to the children of men.”

This distich also is occasionally diversified, and another sometimes annexed illustrative of the sentiment ;

“ For he satisfieth the famished soul,
“ And filleth the hungry with good.”

“ For he hath broken the brazen gates,
“ And the bolts of iron he hath cut in sunder.”

The sentiment of the Epode itself is sometimes repeated, only varied by different imagery :

“ Glorify JEHOVAH for his mercy,
“ And for his wonders to the children of men :
“ Let them also offer sacrifices of praise,
“ And let them declare his works with melody.”

“ Let them exalt him in the assembly of the
“ people,
“ And in the council of the elders let them cele-
“ brate him.”

In all these passages, the transition from the contemplation of their calamities, to that of their deliverance, which is made by the perpetual repetition of the same distich, is truly elegant :

“ Let them also cry unto JEHOVAH in their troubles ;

“ And from their afflictions he will deliver them :”

This however does not appear in the least to partake of the nature of the intercalary verse. The latter part of the Psalm, which comprehends a vast variety of matter, concludes with two distichs expressive of a sentiment, grave, solemn, and practical, and in no respect unworthy the rest of the poem.

There are many other examples to be found in the Psalms ; but it must be confessed, few of them are equal, and none of them superior to this. I shall select another specimen from Isaiah ; and the more willingly, because, in it, as in other passages of the same author, the common division into chapters has greatly obscured that most elegant writer, by absurdly breaking the unity of a very interesting poem, and connecting each part with matter which is totally foreign

reign to the subject. If we unite the conclusion of the ninth chapter with the beginning of the tenth, we shall find a complete and connected prophecy against the kingdom of Israel or Samaria⁶. It is replete with terror and solemnity, and possesses a degree of force and sublimity to which the Idyllium seldom rises; though it preserves the form of the Idyllium so perfect and express, that it cannot with propriety be referred to any other class. The poem consists of four parts, each of which contains a denunciation of vengeance against the crimes of this rebellious people, vehemently accusing them of some atrocious offence, and distinctly marking out the particular punishment. In the first, the pride and ostentation of the Israelites is reproved; in the second, the obduracy of their spirit, and the general depravation of their morals; in the third, their audacious impiety, which rages like a flame, destroying and laying waste the nation; and lastly, their iniquity is set forth

⁶ ISA. ix. 8.—x. 4. “In one MS. a vacant space is left after ISA. x. 4. but no space of the same kind at the end of chap. ix. In another MS. after chap. x. 4. a space of one line is interposed.” K.

as demonstrated in their partial administration of justice, and their oppression of the poor. To each of these a specific punishment is annexed; and a clause, declaratory of a further reserve of the divine vengeance is added, which forms the Epode, and is admirably calculated to exaggerate the horror of the prediction:

“For all this his anger is not turned away;

“But his hand is still stretched out.”

The examples which I have hitherto produced will, at first view, explain their own nature and kind; there are, however, others, and probably not a few, (in the book of Psalms particularly) which may equally be accounted of the Idyllium species. I have principally in contemplation those, in which some particular subject is treated in a more copious and regular manner, than is usual in compositions strictly lyric. Such is the hundred and fourth Psalm, which demonstrates the glory of the infinite Creator, from the wisdom, beauty, and variety of his works. The poet embellishes this noble subject with the clearest and most splendid colouring of language; and with imagery the most magnificent,

nificent, lively, diversified, and pleasing, at the same time select, and happily adapted to the subject. There is nothing of the kind extant, indeed nothing can be conceived, more perfect than this Hymn, whether it be considered with respect to its intrinsic beauties, or as a model of that species of composition. Miraculous exertions of the divine power have something in them which at first strikes the inattentive mind with a strong sentiment of sublimity and awe: but the true subject of praise, the most worthy of God, and the best adapted to impress upon the heart of man a fervent and permanent sense of piety, is drawn from the contemplation of his power in the creation of this infinite All, his wisdom in arranging and adorning it, his providence in sustaining, and his mercy in the regulation of its minutest parts, and in ordering and directing the affairs of men. The Greek Hymns consisted chiefly of fables, and these fables regarded persons and events, which were neither laudable in themselves, nor greatly to be admired; indeed I do not recollect any that are extant of this sublime nature, except that of the famous stoic Cleanthes,

Cleanthes, which is inscribed to Jove, that is to God the creator, or as he expresses himself, "to the Eternal Mind, the Creator " and Governor of Nature". It is doubtless a most noble monument of ancient wisdom, and replete with truths not less solid than magnificent. For the sentiments of the philosopher concerning the divine power, concerning the harmony of nature, and the supreme laws, concerning the folly and unhappiness of wicked men, who are unceasingly subject to the pain and perturbation of a troubled spirit; and above all, the ardent supplication for the divine assistance, in order to enable him to celebrate the praises of the omnipotent Deity in a suitable manner, and in a perpetual strain of praise and adoration; all of these breathe so true and unaffected a spirit of piety, that they seem in some measure to approach the excellence of the Sacred Poetry.

The Hymn of David, which I have just mentioned, deservedly occupies the first place in this class of poems; that which comes

⁷ See CUDWORTH, *Intellect. System.* pag. 432. or H. STEPHAN, *Poesim Philosoph.*

nearest

nearest to it, as well in the conduct of the poem as in the beauty of the style, is another of the same author. It celebrates the omniscience of the Deity, and the incomparable art and design displayed in the formation of the human body; if it be excelled (as perhaps it is) by the former in the plan, disposition, and arrangement of the matter, it is however not in the least inferior in the dignity and elegance of the figures and imagery:

P S A L M CXXXIX.

" Thou, Lord, hast search'd me out, thine eyes
" Mark when I sit, and when I rise;
" By thee my future thoughts are read;
" Thou round my path, and round my bed,
" Attendest vigilant; each word,
" Ere yet I speak, by thee is heard.
" Life's maze, before my view outspread,
" Within thy presence rapt I tread,
" And touch'd with conscious horror stand
" Beneath the shadow of thy hand.
" How deep thy knowledge, Lord, how wide!
" Long to the fruitless task applied,
" That mighty sea my thoughts explore,
" Nor reach its depth, nor find its shore.

" Where

“ Where shall I shun thy wakeful eye,
“ Or whither from thy spirit fly?
“ Aloft to heaven my course I bear;
“ In vain; for thou, my God, art there;
“ If prone to hell my feet descend,
“ Thou still my footsteps shalt attend;
“ If now, on swiftest wings upborne,
“ I seek the regions of the morn,
“ Or haste me to the western steep,
“ Where eve sits brooding o’er the deep;
“ Thy hand the fugitive shall stay,
“ And dictate to my steps their way,
“ Perchance within its thickest veil
“ The darkness shall my head conceal:
“ But, instant, thou hast chas’d away
“ The gloom, and round me pour’d the day.
“ Darkness, great God! to thee there’s none;
“ Darkness and light to thee are one;
“ Nor brighter shines, to thee display’d,
“ The noon, than night’s obscurest shade.
“ My reins, my fabrick’s ev’ry part,
“ The wonders of thy plastic art
“ Proclaim, and prompt my willing tongue
“ To meditate the grateful song:
“ With deepest awe my thoughts their frame
“ Surveys—“ I tremble that I am.”
“ While yet a stranger to the day
“ Within the burthen’d womb I lay,
“ My bones, familiar to thy view,
“ By just degrees to firmness grew:

“ Day

“ Day to succeeding day consign’d
“ Th’ unfinish’d birth; thy mighty mind
“ Each limb, each nerve, e’er yet they were,
“ Contemplated, distinct, and clear;
“ Those nerves thy curious finger spun,
“ Those limbs it fashion’d one by one;
“ And, as thy pen in fair design
“ Trac’d on thy book each shadowy line,
“ Thy handmaid Nature read them there,
“ And made the growing work her care;
“ Conform’d it to th’ unerring plan,
“ And gradual wrought me into man.
“ With what delight, great God, I trace
“ The acts of thy stupendous grace!
“ To count them, were to count the sand
“ That lies upon the sea-beat strand.
“ When from my temples sleep retires,
“ To thee my thankful heart aspires,
“ And with thy sacred presence blest,
“ Joys to receive the awful guest.
“ Shall impious men thy will withstand,
“ Nor feel the vengeance of thy hand?
“ Hence, murth’ers, hence, nor near me stay;
“ Ye sons of Violence, away!
“ When lawless crouds, with insult vain,
“ Thy works revile, thy name profane,
“ Can I unmov’d those insults see,
“ Nor hate the wretch that hateth thee?
“ Indignant, in thy cause I join,
“ And all thy foes, my God, are mine.

“ Searcher

- " Searcher of hearts, my thoughts review ;
" With kind severity pursue
" Through each disguise thy servant's mind,
" Nor leave one stain of guilt behind.
" Guide through th' eternal path my feet,
" And bring me to thy blissful seat."

OF DRAMATIC POETRY.

LECTURE XXX.

THE SONG OF SOLOMON NOT A REGULAR DRAMA.

The Platonic division of Poetry into the narrative, dramatic, and mixed kinds, of little use; but deserves to be noticed on this occasion, as leading to an accurate definition of Dramatic Poetry, and clearing up the ambiguity in which the term has been involved by the moderns.—Two species pointed out: the lesser, which possesses only the form of dialogue, without the personal intervention of the Poet; and the greater, which contains a plot or fable.—There are extant some instances of the former in the writings of the Hebrews; but none of their productions seem to have the least title to the latter character, two perhaps excepted; the Song of Solomon, and the Book of Job.—Inquiry, whether the Song of Solomon contain a complete plot or fable.—It is an Epithalamium: the characters which are represented in it: the Poem founded upon the nuptial rites of the Hebrews.—The opinion of Bossuet cited and explained; namely, that this Poem is a representation of the seven days of festival which succeeded the marriage, and consequently consists of seven parts or divisions.—This opinion the most favourable of all, to those who account this Poem a regular Drama: it however does not prove, that it contains a complete plot or fable.—Definition of a Dramatic Fable.—Nothing like it in the Song of Solomon: it is therefore not a perfect Drama, but is of the lesser class
of

of Dramatic Poems. — The chorus of Virgins bears a great analogy to the chorus of the Greek Tragedies; but could not serve as a model for them.

THE ancient critics following the authority of Plato¹, have distributed all poetical compositions, according to their form or subject, into three classes, the narrative, the imitative or dramatic, and the mixed. This arrangement is, however, not of much use on the whole; it neither draws a perfect line of distinction between the different species of poems, nor serves to define or explain the nature and form of any. There is scarcely any species of poem perfectly simple in its nature, scarcely any which does not occasionally unite these different modes of expression. The Epic indeed may be said to exhibit almost invariably a narration of the mixed kind; and the Dramatic necessarily assumes the imitative form. But as other poems may adopt freely the mixed narration; so I do not see any just reason why they should be absolutely prohibited from assuming the Dramatic form. Custom, however, we find has so far prevailed, that

¹ See PLAT. De Rep. lib. iii.

although

although the style and manner does not seem necessarily appropriated to any particular subject whatever, the name at least of Dramatic has been generally received as distinguishing a particular species of poetry. The present object of inquiry is, therefore, what specimens of this species of composition are extant in the writings of the Hebrews: and in the very first stage of our investigation, some degree of caution will be required, lest the ambiguity of the term, as it has been used by the moderns, should mislead or perplex us.

The term Dramatic Poetry, as I before observed, is now restricted to two particular species of composition, Tragedy and Comedy. It was originally, however, of much more extensive signification; it regarded simply the external form; it was properly applied to every poem composed in dialogue, provided that, throughout the whole, the conversation was carried on by the characters themselves, without the intervention of the Poet*. This mode of composition is exemplified

* The nature of this appropriation of a general term will perhaps be better explained, by briefly adverting to the

emplified in several of the Bucolics of Theocritus and Virgil, in some of the Satires of Horace, and in two of his Odes. In order, therefore, to examine the subject more accurately, it will be proper to distinguish two species of Dramatic Poems; the lesser, in which, by means of dialogue or characters,

History of the Theatre. In fact, there is scarcely any circumstance in which the gradual progress of human invention is more exemplified, than in the origin and improvement of the Greek Drama. It was originally nothing more than a rude Song, exhibited by one or more clownish minstrels or ballad-singers, who disfigured themselves to excite attention. *Thespis* collected a company of them together, and transported them from village to village in a kind of waggon; and something like this state of the Drama we see in the rude exhibitions of *Mummers* and *Morrice-dancers* in the inland parts of this kingdom. *Thespis* added to the singers an interlocutor, who served to explain the matter of the songs; and in this state the Drama continued, till an accident brought it to greater perfection. In the representation of a Tragedy, in which the Furies were exhibited, the barbarous dresses of the chorus (which consisted of fifty persons) frightened the pregnant women into fits. Hence *Æschylus* was induced to retrench the number of the chorus, and to make up for the deficiency, added to the actors or interlocutors. He erected a stage, and ornamented it with machinery; and equipped the actors with the robe, the buskin and the mask. See more upon this subject in *Essays Historical and Moral*, by the Translator of these Lectures, Ess. i. T.

the

the manners, passions, and actions of men, are imitated or delineated; and the greater, which contains, moreover, a plot or fable, that is, the representation of some incident or transaction of life, regular or complete, in which events succeed each other in a connected series, and which after various and interesting vicissitudes is wrought up to a perfect conclusion. This latter species includes both Tragedy and Comedy; and as the plot or fable distinguishes them from the inferior species of Dramatic Poetry, so the perfect form of dialogue serves to draw the line between them and the Epic.

There are abundant examples of the former species of Dramatic Poetry manifestly extant in the writings of the Hebrews; and perhaps there are many others, which we have not discovered to be of this kind. The sudden

Our author has treated with his usual modesty a very difficult subject: on which, those who have been more adventurous have been led into great errors. It is certain that many of the Psalms are dramatic, which some commentators observing, delighted with their own discoveries, whenever they met with a passage more difficult than usual, or were able to catch any new and visionary explanation, more agreeable to their theological notions,

sudden change of persons, when by the vehemence of passion the author is led, as it were

they have eagerly resorted to the change of the persons or characters, though no such change existed. Such are those commentators who have fancied, in accommodation to the quotation of St. Paul, HEB. i. 10. the spirit and purpose of which they did not understand, that the former part of the cited PSALM to the 24th verse: "Take me not away in the midst of my age," consisted entirely of a speech of Christ, and that the remainder; "as for thy years, they endure throughout all generations," &c. was the reply of God the Father. Whoever indulges himself in this mode of explication, may easily find out any thing he pleases in the Psalms, and with little or no philological knowledge, without the smallest assistance from criticism, can give a meaning even to the most difficult or corrupted texts of Scripture: any meaning indeed but the right one.

Our author very justly suspects, that not a few passages of the dramatic kind are at present unknown: yet we are not allowed to suppose an ode of the dramatic kind, unless it appear so by some decisive proof; nor ought we to fly to this discovery as a refuge for our ignorance. For, as many passages may probably be of the dramatic kind which we do not know to be such, so, many may be accounted dramatic, which a little more philological knowledge, or the true reading, which antiquity may have obscured, would point out to be simple and regular compositions. In order to demonstrate how cautious commentators ought to be in these respects, I shall have recourse to one example, whence we shall be able to judge how uncertain

were insensibly, from the narration of an event to the imitation or acting of it, is frequent in the Hebrew poetry; but sometimes the genuine Dramatic, or Dialogue form, is quite apparent, and the passage will admit of no other explanation. The twenty-fourth Psalm is evidently of this kind, relating, as I formerly endeavoured to prove, to the transferring of the ark to Mount Zion; and many others are, however they may bear a face of probability.

The second Psalm has been accounted one of the principal of the dramatic kind, and scarcely any person has doubted of its being altogether dramatic. If you attend to some commentators, the holy Prophet speaks in the 1st and 2d verses; in the 3d the rebellious princes; in the 4th and 5th the Prophet again; in the 6th God; in the 7th and 8th the anointed King; in the 10th, 11th, and 12th, the holy Prophet. It is very extraordinary that they should not see, that it is not the rebellious princes who speak in the 3d verse, but that their words are only referred to by the Prophet, and that, according to the manner of the Orientals, without directly identifying the speaker. Nothing is more common in the Arabic poetry, than to relate the actions and sentiments of particular persons, and to annex their very words without any preface, of *saying*, or *he said*, &c. It does not even appear that God is introduced as a dramatic character, for if so, what is the use of the words—"He shall speak unto them in his wrath," &c.?

M.

Sion; and the whole of the transaction is exhibited in a theatrical manner, though the dialogue is not fully obvious till towards the conclusion of the poem. That remarkable passage of Isaiah also, deserves notice on this occasion, in which the Messiah, coming to vengeance, is introduced conversing with a chorus as on a theatre:

CHO. "Who is this, that cometh from Edom?"

"With garments deeply dyed from Botfra?"

"This, that is magnificent in his apparel;

"Marching on in the greatness of his strength?"

MES. "I, who publish righteousness, and am
"mighty to save.

CHO. "Wherefore is thine apparel red?"

"And thy garments, as of one that tread-
"eth the wine-vat:

MES. "I have trodden the vat alone;

"And of the peoples there was not a man
"with me.

"And I trod them in mine anger;

"And I trampled them in mine indigna-
"tion:

"And their life-blood was sprinkled upon
"my garments;

"And I have stained all mine apparel.

"For the day of vengeance was in my
"heart;

"And the year of my redeemed was come.

"And

“ And I looked, and there was no one to
 “ help;
 “ And I was astonished, that there was no
 “ one to uphold:
 “ Therefore mine own arm wrought salva-
 “ tion for me,
 “ And mine indignation itself sustained
 “ me.
 “ And I trod down the peoples in mine
 “ anger;
 “ And I crushed them in mine indigna-
 “ tion;
 “ And I spilled their life-blood on the
 “ ground*.”

* Isa. lxiii 1—6. “ Ver. 1. after אני in one MS. in
 “ the margin יהוה is added. It is read יהוה, in one MS.
 “ with the demonstrative article annexed. Also ודקה
 “ without ב prefixed in one MS. so the LXX. and the
 “ VULG. It is read ודקה, with ו prefixed in thirty-one
 “ MSS. so the LXX. SYR. VULG.

“ Ver. 2. It is אדום in twenty-eight MSS. and three
 “ edit. ללבושך, plural in twenty-one MSS. so the LXX.
 “ SYR. for the first ל, read מ, according to all the old
 “ translations.

“ Ver. 3. It is read אדרכם, without ו prefixed, in two
 “ MSS. so SYR. VULG. For אבאלתי in one MS. אבאלתי.

“ Ver. 4. שנה, without ו prefixed, in thirty MSS.
 “ and three edit. So VULG.

“ Ver. 5. For וזמתי seven MSS. and three edit.
 “ have ודקתי. See chap. lix. 16.

“ Ver. 6. For ואשכנח read ואשכנח as occurs in
 “ twenty-five MSS. and one edit.” K.

The hundred and twenty-first Psalm is of the same kind ; and as it is both concise and elegant, I shall quote it at large. The king, apparently going forth to battle, first approaches the ark of God upon Mount Sion, and humbly implores the Divine assistance, on which alone he professes to rest his confidence :

“ I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains,

“ Whence cometh my succour.

“ My succour is from JEHOVAH,

“ Who made the heavens and the earth.”

The High-priest answers him from the Tabernacle :

“ He will not suffer thy foot to stumble ;

“ He that preserveth thee will not slumber ;

“ Behold, he will neither slumber nor sleep ;

“ He who preserveth Israel.

“ JEHOVAH will preserve thee ;

“ JEHOVAH will shade thee with his right hand.

“ The sun shall not injure thee by day,

“ Nor the moon by night.

“ JEHOVAH will preserve thee from all evil ;

“ He will preserve thy soul.

“ JEHOVAH will preserve thy going out and thy

“ coming in,

“ From this time forth for ever and ever.”

Thus

Thus much will suffice for that inferior species of Dramatic Poetry, or rather that Dramatic form which may be assumed by any species of poem. The more perfect and regular Drama, that I mean which consists of a plot or fable, will demand a more elaborate investigation.

There are only two poems extant among the writings of the Hebrews which can, on the present occasion, at all be brought into question, the Song of Solomon, and the book of Job; both eminent in the highest degree for elegance, sublimity, and I am sorry to add obscurity also. The almost infinite labours of the learned have left us but little new to say upon this subject; I shall, however, proceed to inquire, with some degree of minuteness, into the form and structure of each of these poems, and into the reasons which may be alledged in favour of their claim to the appellation of regular Dramas. The opinions of other critics shall not pass unregarded, if any remarks or even conjectures occur, which may be likely to throw any light upon the present subject, or to explain or illustrate their principal beauties.

The

The Song of Songs (for so it is entitled either on account of the excellence of the subject, or of the composition) is an Epithalamium, or Nuptial Dialogue; or rather, if we may be allowed to give it a title more agreeable to the genius of the Hebrew, a *Song of Loves*⁵. It is expressive of the utmost fervour as well as the utmost delicacy of passion, it is instinct with all the spirit and all the sweetness of affection. The principal characters are Solomon himself and his bride, who are represented speaking both in dialogue, and in soliloquy when accidentally separated. Virgins also, the companions of the bride, are introduced, who seem to be constantly upon the stage, and bear a part in the dialogue: mention too is made of young men, friends of the bridegroom, but they are mute persons⁶. This is exactly conformable to the manners of the Hebrews, who had always a number of companions to the bridegroom, thirty of whom were present in honour of Sampson, at his nuptial feast⁷. In the New Testament, accord-

⁵ Such is the title of PSALM xlv.

⁶ CANT. v. I. viii. 13. See iii. 7—11.

⁷ JUD. xiv. 11.

ing to the Hebrew idiom, they are called, "children (or sons) of the bride-chamber⁸;" and "friends of the bridegroom⁹;" there too we find mention of ten virgins, who went forth to meet the bridegroom, and conduct him home¹⁰: which circumstances, I think, indicate that this poem is founded upon the nuptial rites of the Hebrews, and is expressive of the forms or ceremonial of their marriages. In this opinion, indeed, the harmony¹¹ of commentators is not less remarkable,

⁸ JOHN III. 29.

⁹ MATT. IX. 15.

¹⁰ LIGHTFOOT ON MATT. *ibid.*

¹¹ Ps. XLV. 15.

¹² It may seem a bold undertaking, to contradict the opinion of all the commentators which has been so long established, that the principal personages of the Canticles are a bride and bridegroom during the nuptial week. As I cannot, however, reconcile the matter to my mind, I shall briefly assign the reasons of my dissent from this opinion. The first is, that no direct mention is made, during the course of this long poem, of the ceremony of marriage; nor of any one of the circumstances which attend that ceremony. Again, who can possibly imagine a bridegroom so necessitated to labour, as not to be able to appropriate a few days in his nuptial week, to the celebration of his marriage; but be compelled immediately to quit his spouse and his friends for whole days, in order to attend his cattle in the pastures? Nay, at this time of festival,

remarkable, than their disagreement concerning the general economy and conduct of the work, and the order and arrangement of the several parts. The present object of inquiry, however, is only whether any plot or fable

festival, he even does not return at night, but leaves his bride, to whom he appears so much attached, alone and unhappy. Or if such instances might occur in particular cases, certainly they do not afford a proper subject for a nuptial song. At the same time, the bridegroom is supposed to have the care of a vineyard, and his brothers are displeased with him for having neglected it; this is so contrary to every idea of nuptial festivity, that unless we could suppose it meant in the way of burlesque, it is impossible to conceive it to have any relation to the celebration of a marriage.

There is still less reason to think, that the poem relates to the state of the parties betrothed before marriage; and there are not the smallest grounds for supposing it the description of any clandestine amour, since the transaction is described as public and legal, and the consent of parents is very plainly intimated.

It remains therefore to explain my own sentiments, and these are, that the chaste passions of conjugal and domestic life are described in this poem, and that it has no relation to the celebration of nuptials. It may seem improbable to some readers, that conjugal and domestic life should afford a subject for an amorous poem; but those readers have not reflected how materially the manners of the Orientals are different from ours. Domestic life among

fable be contained or represented in this poem; and upon this point, the most probable opinion is that of the celebrated Bossuet¹³, a critic, whose profound learning will ever be acknowledged, and a scholar whose exquisite taste will ever be admired. I shall endeavour, as briefly as possible, to explain his sentiments concerning the form and conduct of this poem, whence we shall probably be enabled to decide in some measure concerning the equity of its claim to the title of a regular Drama.

It is agreed on all parts, that the nuptial feast, as well as every other solemn rite among the Hebrews, was hebdomadal¹⁴. Of this circumstance M. Bossuet has availed himself in the analysis of the poem, and he accordingly divides the whole into seven

us is, in general, a calm and settled state, void of difficulties, perplexities, suspicions, and intrigues; and a state like this rarely affords matter for such a poem. But in the East, from the nature of *polygamy*, that state admits more of the perplexities, jealousies, plots, and artifices of love; the scene is more varied, there is more of novelty, and consequently greater scope for invention and fancy.

M.

¹³ See BOSSUET. Præf. & Comment. in CANT.

¹⁴ See GEN. xxix. 27. JUD. xiv. 12.

parts, corresponding to the seven days of its supposed duration¹⁵. The vicissitudes of day and night are marked with some degree of distinctness; he therefore makes use of these as indexes, to point to the true division of the parts. The nuptial banquet being concluded, the bride is led in the evening to her future husband; and here commences the nuptial week; for the Hebrews, in their account of time, begin always at the evening¹⁶. The bridegroom, who is represented in the character of a shepherd, goes forth early in the morning to the accustomed occupations of a rural and pastoral life; the bride presently awaking, and impatient of his absence, breaks out into a soliloquy full of tenderness and anxiety, and this incident

¹⁵ In addition to what I remarked above, there is this circumstance, which militates against the conjecture of Bossuet, namely, that, though the nuptial banquet continues for seven days, no time appears in this poem appropriated to the banquet itself. Either the bride and bridegroom are separated from, and in quest of each other, or they are enjoying a wished-for solitude; and whenever they converse with the Virgins, it is in the street or in the field, and never with the guests, or at a banquet. M.

¹⁶ See GEN. i. 5, &c.

forms

forms the exordium of the poem. The early departure of the bridegroom seems to be according to custom; hence that precaution so frequently and so anxiously repeated not to disturb his beloved:

“ I adjure you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,

“ By the roes and the hinds of the field,

“ That ye disturb not, neither awake

“ The beloved, till herself be inclined.”

Nor less frequent is the following exclamation of the Virgins:

“ Who is she, rising up out of the desert!

“ Who is she, that is seen like the morning!”

In these terms they seem to greet the bride when she first comes out of her chamber: and these several expressions have some allusion to the early time of the morning. The night is also sometimes mentioned in direct terms¹⁹; and sometimes it is indirectly denoted by circumstances²⁰. If therefore any reader, admitting these indications of time,

¹⁷ Chap. ii. 7. iii. 5. viii. 4.

¹⁸ Chap. iii. 6. viii. 5. vi. 10.

¹⁹ Chap. iii. 1. v. 2.

²⁰ Chap. ii. 6. viii. 3.

will

will carefully attend to them, he cannot, I think, but perceive, that the whole of the work consists of seven parts or divisions, each of which occupies the space of a day²¹. The same critic adds, that he can discover the last day to be clearly distinguished as the sabbath; for the bridegroom does not then, as usual, go forth to his rural employments, but proceeds from the marriage-chamber into public with his bride²². Such are the sentiments of this learned person; to which I am inclined to accede, not as absolute demonstration, but as a very ingenious and probable conjecture upon an extremely obscure subject: I follow them therefore as a glimmering of light, which beams forth in the midst of darkness, where it would be al-

²¹ The following is the distribution of the work according to BOSSUET:

1st Day:	Chap. i.	—	ii.	6.
2d —:	Chap. ii.	7,	—	17.
3d —:	Chap. iii.	—	v.	1.
4th —:	Chap. v.	2,	—	9.
5th —:	Chap. vi.	10,	—	11.
6th —:	Chap. vii.	12,	—	3.
7th —:	Chap. viii.	4,	—	14.

²² Chap. viii. 5.

most

most unreasonable to hope for any clearer illumination.

This opinion is the most favourable of all to those who account the Song of Solomon a regular Drama ; for this arrangement seems to display, in some measure, the order and method of a theatrical representation. But if they make use of the term Dramatic according to the common acceptation of the word, this poem must be supposed to contain a fable, or entire and perfect plot or action, of a moderate extent, in which the incidents are all connected, and proceed regularly from one another, and which, after several vicissitudes, is brought to a perfect conclusion. But certainly the bare representation of a nuptial festival cannot in any respect answer to this definition. We are, it is true, very imperfectly instructed in the particular rites and ceremonies of the Hebrew marriages ; but we have no reason to suppose, that in their common and usual form they were possessed of such variety and vicissitude of fortunes and events, as to afford materials for a regular plot or fable. The whole was one even tenour of joy and festivity. An unexpected incident might in-

deed sometimes occur to interrupt the usual order, and to produce such a change of fortune, as might afford a basis for a Dramatic story; and if any such incident is to be found in the poem at present under our consideration, it will establish its claim to that appellation. But the truth is, the keenest inspection of criticism can, throughout the whole, discover no such incident or circumstance; the state of affairs is uniformly the same from the beginning to the end; a few light fluctuations of passion excepted, such as the anxiety of absence, and the amenity and happiness which the lovers enjoy in each others presence. The bride laments the absence of her beloved²³; she seeks, she finds him, she brings him home; again he is lost, she seeks him again, but with different success; she complains, languishes, indites messages to be delivered to him, she indulges her passion in a full and animated description of his person. All this, however, bears no resemblance to a regular plot, nor affords the piece any fairer title to the appellation of a perfect Drama, than the Dramatic Eclogues of Theocritus and Virgil, in which the loves,

²³ Chap. iii. and v.

the amusements, and the emulations of shepherds are depicted, and which no critic has ever classed with the regular fables of Euripides and Terence. Thus far therefore we may safely admit, that the Song of Solomon possesses indeed the Dramatic form, and therefore belongs properly to that inferior species, which was mentioned in the former part of this Lecture; but that it cannot, upon any fair grounds of reason, be accounted a regular Drama.

There is however one circumstance in which this poem bears a very near affinity to the Greek Drama: the chorus of Virgins seems in every respect congenial to the tragic chorus of the Greeks. They are constantly present, and prepared to fulfil all the duties of advice and consolation: they converse frequently with the principal characters; they are questioned by them, and they return answers to their inquiries; they take part in the whole business of the poem, and I do not find that upon any occasion they quit the scene. Some of the learned have conjectured, that Theocritus, who was contemporary with the seventy Greek translators of the Scriptures, and lived with them in the

court of Ptolemy Philadelphus, was not unacquainted with the beauties of this poem, and that he has almost literally introduced some passages from it into his elegant Idylliums²⁴. It might also be suspected, that the Greek tragedians were indebted for their chorus to this poem of Solomon, were not the probabilities on the other side much greater, that the Greeks were made acquainted with it at too late a period; and were it not evident, that the chorus of the Greeks had a very different origin, were it not evident indeed that the chorus was not added to the fable, but the fable to the chorus²⁵.

²⁴ Compare CANT. i. 9. vi. 10. with THEOC. xviii. 30, 26. CANT. iv. 11. with THEOC. xx. 26. CANT. viii. 6, 7. with THEOC. xxiii. 23—26.

²⁵ See Note (2) on this Lecture. The uses that certain apologists for the Greek Drama have found for the chorus, namely, that it heightens the probability, and corrects the ill effects of vicious sentiments in the mouths of the actors, I do not allow. How far the musical part of the chorus might serve to increase the pleasure, or to excite or enliven the passions, is a different question. T.

LECTURE XXXI.

OF THE SUBJECT AND STYLE OF SOLOMON'S SONG.

The question debated, whether the Song of Solomon is to be taken in a literal or allegorical sense: the allegorical sense defended upon the grounds of the Parabolic style.—The nature and ground-work of this allegory explained.—The fastidiousness of those critics reproved, who pretend to take offence at the freedom of some of those images which are found in the Sacred Writings; the nature of those images explained.—The allegorical interpretation confirmed by analogical arguments: not equally demonstrable from the internal structure of the work itself.—This allegory of the third or mystical species; the subject literally relating to the nuptials of Solomon.—Two cautions to be observed by commentators.—The style of the Poem pastoral: the characters are represented as pastoral; how agreeable this to the manners of the Hebrews.—The elegance of the topics, descriptions, comparisons of this Poem: illustrated by examples.

HAVING, in my last Lecture, briefly explained what appeared to me most probable, among the great variety of opinions which have prevailed, concerning the conduct and economy of the Song of Solomon, a question next presents itself for our investigation, not less involved in doubt and ob-

scurity, I mean the real nature and subject of the poem. Some are of opinion, that it is to be taken altogether in a literal sense, and others esteem it wholly allegorical. There is no less disagreement also among those who consider it as allegorical; some conceive it to be no more than a simple allegory, while others place it in that class which I have denominated mystical, that, namely, which is founded upon the basis of history. I would gladly, from the first, have considered this question as foreign to my undertaking, and would have avoided it as involved in the deepest obscurity, had I not, in the former part of these Lectures, been under the necessity of remarking the connexion between the different kinds of allegory and the principles of the Sacred Poetry; had I not also found it necessary to advert to all the peculiarities of the parabolic style, the most obvious property of which is to express by certain images, chiefly adopted from natural objects, the analogy and application of which is regularly preserved, those ideas and doctrines which are more remote from common apprehension. This I cannot help considering as a matter of the utmost importance, in enabling

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bling us to understand properly the poetry of the Hebrews; and upon this point much of the present argument will be found to depend.

I shall on this, as well as upon the last occasion, proceed with that cautious reserve which I think prudent and necessary on so obscure a subject; and since certainty is not to be obtained, I shall content myself with proposing to your consideration what appears least improbable. In the first place then I confess, that by several reasons, by the general authority and consent of both the Jewish and Christian churches; and still more, by the nature and analogy of the parabolic style, I feel irresistibly inclined to that side of the question which considers this poem as an entire allegory. Those, indeed, who have considered it in a different light, and who have objected against the inconsistency and meanness of the imagery, seem to be but little acquainted with the genius of the parabolic diction; for the removal, therefore, of these difficulties, which I find have been the cause of offence to many persons, I shall beg leave to trespass upon your attention, while I explain somewhat more

accurately the nature of this allegory, and its analogy with other productions of the Hebrew poets.

The narrowness and imbecillity of the human mind being such, as scarcely to comprehend or attain a clear idea of any part of the Divine nature by its utmost exertions; God has condescended, in a manner, to contract the infinity of his glory, and to exhibit it to our understandings under such imagery as our feeble optics are capable of contemplating. Thus the Almighty may be said to descend, as it were, in the Holy Scriptures, from the height of his majesty, to appear on earth in a human shape, with human senses and affections, in all respects resembling a mortal—"with human voice and human form." This kind of allegory is called anthropopathy, and occupies a considerable portion of theology, properly so called, that is, as delivered in the Holy Scriptures. The principal part of this imagery is derived from the passions; nor indeed is there any one affection or emotion of the human soul which is not, with all its circumstances, ascribed in direct terms, without any qualification whatever, to the supreme

preme God ; not excepting those in which human frailty and imperfection is most evidently displayed, anger and grief, hatred and revenge. That love also, and that of the tenderest kind, should bear a part in this Drama, is highly natural and perfectly consistent. Thus, not only the fondness of paternal affection is attributed to God, but also the force, the ardour, and the solicitude of conjugal attachment, with all the concomitant emotions, the anxiety, the tenderness, the jealousy incidental to this passion.

After all, this figure is not in the least productive of obscurity ; the nature of it is better understood than that of most others ; and although it be exhibited in a variety of lights, it constantly preserves its native perspicuity. A peculiar people, of the posterity of Abraham, was selected by God from among the nations, and he ratified his choice by a solemn covenant. This covenant was founded upon reciprocal conditions ; on the one part love, protection, and support ; on the other faith, obedience, and worship pure and devout. This is that conjugal union between God and his church ; that solemn compact so frequently celebrated by almost all
the

the sacred writers under this image. It is indeed a remarkable instance of that species of metaphor which Aristotle calls *analogical*¹; that is, when in a proposition consisting of four ideas, the first bears the same relation to the second as the third does to the fourth, and the corresponding words may occasionally change their places without any injury to the sense. Thus in this form of expression God is supposed to bear exactly the same relation to the church as a husband to a wife; God is represented as the spouse of the church, and the church as the betrothed of God. Thus also, when the same figure is maintained with a different mode of expression, and connected with different circumstances, the relation is still the same: thus the piety of the people, their impiety, their idolatry, and rejection, stand in the same relation with respect to the sacred covenant; as chastity, modesty, immodesty, adultery, divorce, with respect to the marriage contract. And this notion is so very familiar and well understood in Scripture, that the word adultery (or whoredom) is com-

¹ POET. chap. xxli. and RHET. iii. 3.

monly used to denote idolatrous worship, and so appropriated does it appear to this metaphorical purpose, that it very seldom occurs in its proper and literal sense.

Let us only observe how freely the sacred poets employ this image, how they dwell upon it, in how many different forms they introduce it, and how little they seem to fear exhibiting it with all its circumstances. Concerning the reconciliation of the church to Almighty God, and its restoration to the divine favour, amongst many images of a similar nature, the elegant Isaiah introduces the following :

“ For thy husband is thy maker ;

“ JEHOVAH, God of Hosts, is his name :

“ And thy Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel ;

“ The God of the whole earth shall he be
“ called ² .”

And in another passage in the form of a comparison :

“ For as a young man weddeth a virgin,

“ So shall thy Restorer wed thee ³ :

“ And

² ISA. liv. 5.

³ The ambiguity of the word which I translate “ thy restorer,” has created inextricable difficulties to all the translators

“ And as the bridegroom rejoiceth in his bride,
“ So

translators and commentators, both ancient and modern. The LXX have mistaken it, and the Masorites have mispointed it. Their authority has consecrated the error, and almost established it. Nothing however appears clearer to me, than that this word בניך is not the plural of the noun בן (*ben*, a son) but of the participle *benoni* of the verb בנה (*benah*, to build) and is parallel and synonymous to *thy God* in the alternate member. Compare the above quoted passage of ISAIAH, where also mark that *husbands* and *creators* occur in the plural, with the same relation to the same word. By this explanation, every offensive and indelicate idea is taken away from the passage, which I do not wonder proved an impediment in the way of the commentators. There is another passage of ISAIAH, in which the same word is egregiously misunderstood by the Masorites :

“ They that destroyed thee, shall soon become thy
“ builders ;

“ And they that laid thee waste, shall become thine off-
“ spring.” ISA. xlix. 17.

Thus, in spite of the Masorites, the sentence ought to be distributed ; thus it ought to be explained conformably to the LXX, who have translated not only this ambiguous word, (as also the CHAL. and VULG.) but the whole period also with the greatest accuracy, elegance, taste, and erudition :

Ταχυ οικοδομηθησθι ὑφ' ὧν καθρεθης,
Και οἱ ἐρημωσαντες σε ἐξελυσουσιναι ἐκ σου.

The

“ So shall thy God rejoice in thee ⁴. ”

The same image a little diversified, and with greater freedom of expression, as better adapted to the display of indignation, is introduced by Jeremiah ⁵, when he declaims against the defection of the Jews from the worship of the true God. Upon the same principle the former part of the prophecy of Hosea ought also to be explained; and whether that part of the prophecy be taken in the literal and historical sense, or whether it be esteemed altogether allegorical, still the nature and principles of this figure, which seems consecrated in some measure to this subject,

The ARAB. as in general, copies them. See a similar idiom in Ps. cvi. 13. EXOD. ii. 18. and the same sense of the verb *jotza*, JER. xxx. 21. NAHUM i. 11.

In this verse also, for כי יבעל the LXX. SYR. and CHAL. read כי יבעל. “ Before יבעלך one MS. adds כן, so the “ LXX. SYR. CHAL. For ומשׁושׁ one MS. has וכמשׁושׁ, “ and another כמשׁושׁ.” K. *Author's Note.*

⁴ ISA. lxii. 5. See JOHN iii. 29, &c. and note (11) in answer to Michaelis, on the allegorical sense of Solomon's Song. S. H.

“ Sir John Chardin, in his note on this place, tells “ us, that it is the custom in the East for youths, that “ were never married, always to marry virgins; and “ widowers, however young, to marry widows.” Harmer, Observ. ii. p. 482. T.

⁵ JER. iii. 1, &c.

will

will evidently appear. None of the Prophets, however, have applied the image with so much boldness and freedom as Ezekiel, an author of a most fervid imagination, who is little studious of elegance, or cautious of offending; insomuch, that I am under some apprehension of his incurring no inconsiderable share of censure from those over-delicate critics who have been emitted from the Gallic schools⁶. His great freedom in the use

⁶ Nothing can be more disgusting to any person of common sense, than the arrogant pretences of our neighbours on the continent to superior refinement and civilization; and I confess, on a fair investigation, I am utterly at a loss to find in what this boasted superiority consists. Is it seen in their enlarged and liberal notions of civil government, in their toleration and general information on politics and religion, in the mildness of their punishments and the equity of their laws? Is it marked by their progress in the great and useful sciences, by their Bacons and their Boyles, their Newtons and their Lockes? Does it appear in the sublimity, the grandeur, the elegance of their poets? Or is it demonstrated by still more certain marks of civilization, by the general cleanliness, decency, and industry of the common people? Is it seen in the convenience and grandeur of their public roads, and the accommodations afforded to travellers in every part of the kingdom? Does it appear in the face of the country, the high state of cultivation, and the success and improvement

use of this image is particularly displayed in
two

provement of agriculture? Or lastly, is it demonstrable from the morals of the people at large, from the independence, the dignity, the probity, particularly of the trading classes of society? I know no other marks of civilization than these; and if the admirers of Gallic frippery cannot answer these questions to my satisfaction, I shall continue to give but little credit to their pretensions to extraordinary refinement and politeness. T.

That diversity of manners, that delicacy of conversation, which is observed by some nations, and the coarseness of others, results chiefly from the degree of intercourse which subsists between the sexes. In countries where the intercourse is free and familiar, where the sexes meet commonly in mixed companies, they accustom themselves to a greater modesty and delicacy in their conversation, which modesty is easily transferred to their composition. Such a people, therefore, with whom entertainments would seem languid and dull without the company of young women, though perhaps not free from licentiousness in their manners, will yet be chaste and delicate in their expressions. Hence arises, in a great degree, that extreme delicacy in the people of modern Europe, which can scarcely bear some of the passages in Virgil, and the chastest of the ancient poets. The case is quite different with the people of the East: for the men having scarcely any society with the unmarried women, or with the wives of others, converse together without being restrained by the blushes of females, or with their own wives, whom they regard in a very inferior light, and consequently treat with all the insolence
of

two parables⁷, in which he describes the ingratitude of the Jews and Israelites to their great Protector, and their defection from the true worship under imagery assumed from the character of an adulterous wife, and the meretricious loves of two unchaste women. If these parables (which are put into the mouth of God himself with a direct allegorical application, and in which it must be confessed, that delicacy does not appear to be particularly studied) be well considered, I am persuaded, that the Song of Solomon (which is in every part chaste and elegant) will not appear unworthy of the divine sense in which it is usually taken, either in matter or style, or in any degree inferior either in gravity or purity to the other remains of the Sacred Poets. To these instances I may add the forty-fifth Psalm, which is a sacred Epithalamium, of the allegorical application of

of familiarity: the women also converse chiefly with each other; and as they are similarly situated, are probably not less licentious. It is not extraordinary, therefore, if greater freedom of speech should prevail in those countries, and if this, when transferred into their poetry, should be found to offend our ears, which are accustomed to so much greater delicacy in conversation. M.

⁷ EZEK. xvi. and xxiii.

which,

which, to the union between God and the church, I do not find that any doubt has hitherto been entertained; though many suspect it, and not without good reason, to have been produced upon the same occasion, and with the same relation to a real fact⁸ as the Song of Solomon. Neither ought we to omit, that the writers of the New Testament⁹ have freely admitted the same image in the same allegorical sense with their predecessors, and have finally consecrated it by their authority¹⁰.

⁸ Perhaps the completion and consecration of the temple. See note (11). S. H.

⁹ See MATT. ix. 15. JOHN iii. 29. 2 COR. xi. 2. EPH. v. 23, &c. REV. xix. 7. xxi. 2. xxii. 17.

¹⁰ What CHARDIN relates of the Persian poetry, may perhaps not be unworthy of the reader's notice in this place. "Debauchery and licentiousness," says he, "are the common topics of these compositions; but I must not omit remarking, that the most serious of their poets treat of the sublimest mysteries of theology, under the most licentious language, in the way of allegory, as Afez in his *Kafel*." Voyage de CHARDIN, 4to. tom. ii. cap. xiv. But respecting this matter see the arguments on both sides elegantly stated by the learned Sir WILLIAM JONES. *Poef. Asiaticæ Comment.* cap. ix.

Author's Note.

These reasons appear to me sufficient to remove those objections founded on the meanness of the imagery, which render many critics averse to the allegorical explanation of this poem. I shall not attempt to confirm this opinion by any internal evidence from the poem itself, as I do not scruple to confess myself deterred by the great difficulty of the undertaking. For though induced by the most ancient authority, and still more by the analogy of this with other similar allegories contained in the Hebrew writings, I am fully persuaded of the truth of what I have advanced; yet I am still apprehensive that it would be extremely difficult to establish the hypothesis by direct arguments from the internal structure of the work itself¹¹.

But

¹¹ Our author has treated this very difficult subject with more modesty and more address than any of the commentators; and indeed has said all that could be said, exclusive of the theological arguments in favour of the allegorical sense. I question, however, whether he will be able to remove all doubt from the mind of a cool and attentive reader; the reasons of my scepticism on this matter, I will, as a person earnestly desirous of the truth, endeavour briefly to explain; and I shall hold myself greatly

But if, after all, it be allowed that this work is of the allegorical kind, another question

ly indebted to that man, who shall, upon rational principles, undertake to remove my scruples.

With regard to the authority of the ancient Christian church, in a question merely depending upon the exposition of a passage in Scripture, I hold it of very little importance, not only because the exposition of Scripture does not depend upon human authority, but because the fathers, as well on account of their ignorance of the Hebrew language, as of the principles of polite literature in general, were very inadequate to the subject; eagerly pursuing certain mystical meanings, even with respect to the clearest passages, in the explanation of which, the most enlightened of the modern commentators have refuted them. The time of the fathers was so very distant from the period when this poem was composed, that it is impossible they should have been possessed of any certain tradition concerning its purport and meaning. I should entertain very different sentiments, if I could find any mention of the Song of Songs in the New Testament; but on the most diligent examination, I have not been able to discern the slightest allusion to that poem.

The authority of the Synagogue is of still less importance in my eyes, since in other respects we have found it so little deserving of confidence in its attempts at expounding the Scriptures. Such of the Jewish writers as have treated of the Canticles lived so many ages after the time of Solomon, after the total destruction of the commonwealth and literature of the Hebrews, that they knew no more of the matter than ourselves.

tion remains, namely, to which of the three classes of allegory already specified it properly belongs.

With regard to the analogy of other poems, all that can be said is, that it was indeed possible enough for Solomon to celebrate the Divine love in terms analogous to those descriptive of the human affections: but it is impossible to determine by that analogy, what kind of love he intended to be the subject of this poem. Shall we pretend to say, that his attention was wholly employed upon Sacred Poetry, and that he never celebrated in verse any of the human affections? Or, because some of the Hebrew poems celebrate the Divine goodness in terms expressive of the human passions, does it follow, that on no occasion those terms are to be taken in their literal sense?

Our author has prudently declined examining the arguments which are usually taken from the poem itself, and from its internal structure, for the purpose of establishing the allegory. It is indeed very improbable, that in so long a poem, if it were really allegorical, no vestiges, no intimation should be found to direct us to apply it to the Divine love; nothing, which does not most clearly relate to the human passion: and that too, considering it as the production of one of the Hebrew writers, who are accustomed to mix the literal sense with the allegorical in almost all their compositions of this kind. In so long an allegory one should also expect a deeper moral than usual, and one not generally obvious to be indicated: but no sober commentator has ever been able to deduce from the Canticles any other than this trite sentiment, that God loves his church, and is beloved by it. That this simple sentiment should be treated so prolixly, and nothing more distinctly

belongs. The first of these, you will recollect, was the continued metaphor; the second

distinctly revealed concerning it, who can credit, but upon the soundest basis of argument or proof? But in support of it we have only the bare position, that the Hebrew writers sometimes make use of allegorical expressions to denote the Divine love.

I am aware of the objections which are started by those who rest the matter upon theological arguments (though I cannot find that these are of great weight or utility in the present debate: for they seem rather calculated to silence than convince). They assert, that though the book has never been quoted by Christ or his Apostles, it was yet received into the Sacred Canon, and is therefore to be accounted of Divine original: and that there does not appear any thing in it divine, or worthy of sacred inspiration, unless it be supposed to contain the mystery of the Divine love. Left, however, they should seem to have proved too much, and lest they should dismiss the reader prepossessed with some doubts concerning the Divine authority of the book, I will venture to remind these profound reasoners, that the chaste and conjugal affections so carefully implanted by the Deity in the human heart, and upon which so great a portion of human happiness depends, are not unworthy of a muse fraught even with Divine inspiration. Only let us suppose, contrary to the general opinion concerning the Canticles, that the affection, which is described in this poem, is not that of lovers previous to their nuptials, but the attachment of two delicate persons, who have been long united in the sacred bond, can we suppose such happiness unworthy of

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being

second the parable, strictly so called; and the third, the mystical allegory, which, under

being recommended as a pattern to mankind, and of being celebrated as a subject of gratitude to the great author of happiness? This is indeed a branch of morals which may be treated in a more artificial and philosophical manner; and such a manner will perhaps be more convincing to the understanding, but will never affect the heart with such tender sentiments as the Song of Solomon; in which there exists all the fervour of passion, with the utmost chastity of expression, and with that delicacy and reserve, which is ever necessary to the life and preservation of conjugal love. Let us remember, moreover, that Solomon, in his Proverbs, has not disdained very minutely to describe the felicities and infelicities of the conjugal state. M,

Notwithstanding all that this learned writer has so ably advanced against the allegorical import of this exquisite Idyllium, I cannot be prevailed upon entirely to relinquish the idea. That compositions of a similar kind are still extant amongst the Asiatics is certain. The Loves of Megnoun and Leileh have been celebrated in the Arabic, Persian, and Turkish languages, with all the charms of poetic rapture, whilst the impassioned lovers themselves are regarded in the same allegorical light, as the bridegroom and bride in the Song of Songs. Exclusive, however, of this consideration, there appear to stand forth in the composition itself indisputable traits of an allegorical sense. For, though (from our imperfect knowledge of the extraneous manners, arts, local peculiarities, and literature, of so singular a people, at so distant a period) we be now unable to apply the thing signified to its proper sign,

der the veil of some historical fact, conceals a meaning more sacred and sublime. I must confess,

sign, yet a variety of images obtrude themselves upon us that evidently contain a symbolical meaning.—JEHOVAH having chosen the Jewish nation as his peculiar people, and being frequently, *by the Prophets AFTER Solomon*, represented as *their HUSBAND*, and they personified as *his WIFE*; might not the consecration (2 CHRON. vii.) of the Temple, as an habitation for the Lord to dwell in, and there receive them to himself, have suggested to Solomon the idea of a CONJUGAL UNION, and induced him to adapt an allegory to it?—As to the allegation, that this poem is not cited in the New Testament; it will, upon this ground, be of the less weight; for our Saviour, in the parables of the ten Virgins and the Marriage Supper, has adopted (if not from it) the same allegory, as well as in other passages [MARK ix. 15, &c.] and is himself not only pointed out to the Jews expressly in the character of a bridegroom, by John Baptist [JOHN iii.] but referred to, under it, by St. Paul [EPH. v. &c.] and more particularly in the Apocalyps. How far this conjecture may be supported, I will not venture at present to pronounce, but thus much it may be proper to observe, that such images as the *tents of Kedar* compared to the *complexion of a young female*; the *tower of David* to her *neck*; *Tirza* to her *beauty*, and *Jerusalem* to her *comeliness*; the *fish-pools of Heshbon by the gates of Bethrabbim*, to her *eyes*; the *tower of Lebanon looking towards Damascus*, to her *nose*; the *mount of Carmel*, to her *head*; with others of a similar kind, would, I think, have never been selected, to

confess, that I am clearly of the same opinion with those who assign this production to the latter class of allegories; the reason of which will be evident, if it be admitted that there is any thing in the poem at all allegorical; since there can scarcely be any doubt that it relates in a literal sense to the nuptials of Solomon. Those also who are conversant with the writings of the Hebrew poets will easily perceive how agreeable the conduct of this poem is to the practice of those writers, who are fond of annexing a secret and solemn sense to the obvious meaning of their compositions, and of looking through the medium of human affairs to those which are celestial and divine. The subject of the Canticles appears to be the marriage feast of Solomon (who was both in name and in reality the Prince of Peace); his bride is also

exemplify the beauties of a BRIDE, in any composition that was not allegorical.

The idea above suggested will, perhaps, receive no little countenance from the chapter cited as above (2 CHRON. vii.) Bossuet's division of the poem into seven days, is perfectly conformable to the fact mentioned in the 8th and 9th verses—where we learn, that the dedication of the altar was celebrated by a festival that continued for the same space of time. S. H.

called

called *Solomitis*¹², the same name with a feminine termination; though the latter Jews have strangely disguised and obscured it by a vicious pronunciation: for Solomon and Solomitis have evidently the same relation to each other, as the Latin names Caius and Caia. This circumstance of the names was not to be disregarded, since they seem to have a very strict connexion, and to afford a very distinct intimation of the latent meaning: for to what purpose innovate the usual practice of the Hebrews, by assigning to the wife of Solomon the same name, unless from a regard to the force and meaning of the word? Unless it was meant to indicate, that the name of Solomon himself was not without importance, not without some further aim than merely the distinction of the person? Who this wife of Solomon was, is not clearly ascertained: but some of the learned have conjectured, with an appearance of probability, that she was the daughter of Pharaoh, to whom Solomon was known to be particularly attached. May we not there-

¹² שלמה שולמית; which may be expressed in Greek Σολομων, Σωλομιτις. CANT. viii. 1.

fore,

fore, with some shadow of reason, suspect, that under the allegory of Solomon chusing a wife from the Egyptians, might be darkly typified that other Prince of Peace, who was to espouse a church, chosen from among the Gentiles " ?

Concerning the explanation of this allegory, I will only add, that, in the first place, we ought to be cautious of carrying the figurative application too far, and of entering into a precise explication of every particular: as these minute investigations

" This very nice and remote allusion to Christ is totally destroyed by an unlucky observation of Dr. Hodgson, who very properly remarks, that the Bride, who is the subject of this poem, could not be the daughter of Pharaoh, for in the third chapter, ver. 4. she expressly says:

" I would not let him go,

" Till I had led him into the house of my mother."

" If therefore," says the Doctor, " she had been the daughter of Pharaoh, her mother's house would have been in Egypt; whereas the scene of this poem evidently lies at Jerusalem." See Dr. HODGSON'S Version of this Poem, *Notes on chap. iii.*

The quotations from the Canticles in this and the last Lecture are chiefly taken from the above elegant publication. T.

are

are seldom conducted with sufficient prudence not to offend the serious part of mankind, learned as well as unlearned. Again, I would advise, that this production be treated according to the established rules of this kind of allegory, fully and expressly delivered in the Sacred Writings, and that the author be permitted to be his own interpreter. In this respect the errors of critics and divines¹⁴ have been as numerous as they have been pernicious. Not to mention other absurdities, they have taken the allegory not as denoting the universal state of the church, but the spiritual state of individuals; than which, nothing can be more inconsistent with the very nature and ground-work of the allegory itself, as well as with the general practice of the Hebrew poets on these occasions.

It remains to offer a few remarks upon the style of this poem. I formerly intimated that it was of the pastoral kind; since the two principal personages are represented in the character of shepherds¹⁵. This circumstance is by no means incongruous to

¹⁴ BERNARD, DURHAM, SANCTIUS, BOSSUET, &c.

¹⁵ See chap. i. 7, 8.

the manners of the Hebrews, whose principal occupation consisted in the care of cattle¹⁶; nor did they consider this employment as beneath the dignity of the highest characters. Least of all, could it be supposed inconsistent with the character of Solomon¹⁷, whose father was raised from the sheep-fold to the throne of Israel. The pastoral life is not only most delightful in itself, but, from the particular circumstances and manners of the Hebrews, is possessed of a kind of dignity. In this poem it is adorned with all the choicest colouring of language, with all the elegance and variety of the most select imagery. "Every part of the Canticles," says a modern writer, "abounds in poetical beauties; the objects, which present themselves on every side, are the choicest plants, the most beautiful flowers, the most delicious fruits, the bloom and vigour of spring, the sweet verdure of the fields, flourishing

¹⁶ See GEN. xlv. 32—34.

¹⁷ Though not inconsistent with Solomon, yet exceedingly so in respect to his supposed Egyptian bride, as shepherds were held in abomination by the Egyptians. This confirms Dr. Hodgson's idea in the last note. S. H.

" and

“ and well-watered gardens, pleasant streams,
“ and perrenial fountains. The other senses
“ are represented as regaled with the most
“ precious odours, natural and artificial;
“ with the sweet singing of birds, and the
“ soft voice of the turtle; with milk and
“ honey, and the choicest of wine. To
“ these enchantments are added all that is
“ beautiful and graceful in the human form,
“ the endearments, the caresses, the delicacy
“ of love; if any object be introduced which
“ seems not to harmonize with this delightful
“ scene, such as the awful prospect of
“ tremendous precipices, the wildness of the
“ mountains, or the haunts of the lions;
“ its effect is only to heighten by the contrast
“ the beauty of the other objects, and
“ to add the charms of variety to those of
“ grace and elegance¹⁸.” In the following
passage the force and splendour of description
is united with all the softness and tenderness
of passion:

“ Get thee up my companion,

“ My lovely one, come away:

“ For lo! the winter is past,

¹⁸ BOSSUET, Pref. to the CANT.

“ The

- " The rain is over, is gone,
 " The flowers are seen on the earth;
 " The season of the song is come,
 " And the voice of the turtle is heard in our
 " land:
 " The fig-tree puts forth its green figs,
 " And the vine's tender grapes yield a fragrance:
 " Arise, my companion, my fair one, and
 " come ¹⁹."

The following comparisons abound in sweetness and delicacy:

- " How sweet is thy love, O my sister, O spouse,
 " How much better than wine is thy love,
 " And the odour of thy perfumes than all spices!
 " Thy lips, O spouse, distil honey from the comb,
 " Honey and milk are under thy tongue,
 " And the scent of thy garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon ²⁰."

There are some others which demand a more accurate investigation.

- " Thy hair is like a flock of goats,
 " That browse upon Mount Gilead ²¹."

The

¹⁹ Chap. ii. 10—13.

²⁰ Chap. iv. 10, 11.

²¹ Chap. iv. 1—5. " It is by no means an easy matter to produce any other explanation of this and the following

The hair of the goats was soft, smooth, of

“ following words, than that which had long since been
 “ received by the old translators. The word which is
 “ here rendered *browse*, denotes in the Arabic *to ascend*, or
 “ *to pass from a lower to a higher situation*; and I scarcely
 “ see how this sense can be admitted in this place. The
 “ LXX have it *απικαλυφθῆσαι*, and in chap. vi. 4. *αμφεργασθαι*
 “ (they appear). But the word *to shine* will perhaps
 “ agree better both in this passage and wherever this
 “ word occurs. But if the verb *והיה* be taken in this pas-
 “ sage in the sense of *ascending*, we must take the whole
 “ as it is above expressed; namely, as descriptive of a
 “ flock of goats covering the side of the mountain from
 “ the bottom to the top.” H.

Galash does not mean to *browse* or to *appear*, but to
 ascend, whether we follow the SEPTUAGINT, the SY-
 RIAC, the VULGATE, or the ARABIC copy. The use
 of the latter word in this place is not indeed very easy to
 conceive, as “ to ascend from mount Gilead” appears an
 odd phrase. Possibly the passage ought to be construed—
 “ Thy locks are as a flock of goats ASCENDING, which
 “ are seen from Mount Gilead.” M.

Thy hair is like a herd of goats

That go down from Mount Gilead [in the morning to
 the watering.]

Deriving *והיה* from an Arabic word, which Schultens ex-
 plains to go to be watered in the morning.

That BROWSE, is a sense obtained from the Syriac and
 Chaldee. Those who render the word *shine*, are in-
 debted to a transposition of letters in *גלש* *snow*, for this
 signification. S. H.

a yellow

a yellow cast, like that of the bride²²; her beautiful tresses are compared with the numerous flocks of goats which covered this flourishing mountain from the top to the bottom.

“Thy teeth are like the shorn flock²³”

“Which have come up from the washing place,

“All of which have twins²⁴,

“And none among them is bereaved.”

The

²² See chap. vii. 5. and compare 1 SAM. xix. 13, 16. with xvi. 12. Consult BOCHART, Hieroz. part i. lib. ii. 51.

²³ “The verb *Katzab* means to cut off, or cut down; the interpretation, therefore, of the word *ketzubah*, (shorn) which many have adopted, and which is confirmed by all the old translations, appears to me the most probable. From the same verb, I think, may be deduced the signification *precisely equal*, intimating that the sheep were all exactly shorn to one standard as it were. (See BOCHART, Hieroz. part i. lib. ii. 45.) Will not this sense better suit the connexion? Is not the *whiteness* and *purity* of sheep (and so of teeth) expressed in these two lines, rather than their *evenness*, which seems to be included in those that follow? H.

²⁴ “The Arabic verb *كان* denotes not only to bring forth twins, but also to have a companion: whence *كان* joined, or connected in a series; and *חממה*, says GOLIUS, is a pearl, from the link, or order of the pearls.

“Nothing

The evenness, whiteness, and unbroken order of the teeth, is admirably expressed.

“ Like the twice-dyed thread of crimson are thy
“ lips,
“ And thy language is sweet.”

That is, thin and ruby-coloured, such as add peculiar graces to the sweetness of the voice.

“ Like the slice of a pomegranate
“ Are thy cheeks amidst thy tresses.”

Partly

“ Nothing can be more expressive than this image of the
“ beautiful regularity and equality of the teeth. The
“ learned MICHAELIS prefers *twins*, referring perhaps to
“ the counterpart in the next member.” H.

“ “ *Behind thy veil*, says MICHAELIS, from the Arabic
“ *to fasten together* : and the well-known
“ GIGOEIUS to have a *stipated head*; placed with-
“ in a small integument.” H.

“ As the opening blossom of the pomegranate are thy
“ cheeks,
“ From within thy locks.”

Simon accurately interprets *נִבְּחָה* by *the bursting forth of a flower*, and Guarini by *balaustrum*, a word which Pliny will enable us to explain. He observes, that the embryo of the pomegranate, which has its origin in the flower,

Partly obscured, as it were, by her hair, and exhibiting a gentle blush of red from beneath the delicate shade, as the seeds of the pomegranate (the colour of which is white tinged with red) surrounded by the rind.

“ Thy neck is like the tower of David

“ Built for an armoury ²⁶;

“ A thousand shields are hung up against it,

“ All bucklers for the mighty.”

The neck is described as long, erect, slender, according to the nicest proportion; decorated with gold, gems, and large pearls. It

is called by the Greeks *citynus*; and adds, that the young blossom which breaks forth before the fruit becomes visible, is distinguished by the name *balauftium*. Dioscorides, however, has remarked, that *balauftium* is the blossom of the *wild*, and *citynus* of the *cultivated* pomegranate. [See Notes on Vathek, p. 309, &c.]—צמח here translated locks in a figurative sense, is properly that radiated down which grows round the blossom of the pomegranate, and partially shades it, as the hair does the cheeks. S. H.

²⁶ “ The word חלפיות, which may be numbered among those that occur but once, certain critics, says R. L. B. GERSHOM, derive from חלה, to suspend, and פיות, that is, חרבות, of a sword: others from חלה, and אלף 1000, suppose of swords: thus in the following sentence, אלף “ חמנן חלף עלי will afford an etymological explication of “ this word.” H.

is compared with some turret of the citadel of Sion, more lofty than the rest, remarkable for its elegance, and not less illustrious for its architecture than for the trophies with which it was adorned, being hung round with shields and other implements of war.

“ Thy two breasts are like two young kids,
 “ Twins of the gazal, that browse among the
 “ lilies.”

Delicate and smooth, standing equally prominent from the ivory bosom. The animal

” “ Thy two paps are like two young kids,
 “ Twins of the gazal,
 “ That browse amongst the lilies.”

The points of similitude between the objects here compared, I apprehend to consist :

1. In the *colour* of these young animals, which in the original is called עֵפֶר, *white deepening into red* (from an Arabic word of this import) whence their name is derived.

2. In their *relative height*, as just rising above the growth of lilies: they being compared to “ paps that never gave suck.”

These circumstances are noticed to justify this translation, for the *fauns* of a ROE, neither in *colour* nor *height*, at all correspond to the objects compared. S. H.

with which they are compared is an animal of exquisite beauty, and from that circumstance it derives its name in the Hebrew. Nothing can, I think, be imagined more truly elegant and poetical than all these passages, nothing more apt or expressive, than these comparisons. The discovery of these excellencies, however, only serves to increase our regret for the many beauties which we have lost, the perhaps superior graces, which extreme antiquity seems to have overcast with an impenetrable shade.²⁸

²⁸ It is much to be lamented, that no commentator has arisen sufficiently qualified to explain this beautiful poem. Those who have attempted it have been scholastic divines, rather indeed mystics, and have entirely overlooked the obvious and more elegant meaning. Indeed the task is by no means easy: besides a very accurate and idiomatical knowledge of the Oriental languages, an intimate acquaintance with the manners of antiquity, and no small information concerning natural history, will be requisite: to these must be added a good deal of reading in the Arabic poetry, particularly in their compositions of the amorous kind, and last of all a true taste for poetry. Very few of these qualities have existed separately, and never all of them conjunctly in those who have undertaken to illustrate this poem.

In order to exemplify how much might be effected towards clearing up the obscurities of this most elegant composition, by a knowledge of natural history alone, I will

will endeavour to explain my opinion of some difficult passages (chap. v. 11, 14. vii. 6, 14.) In ch. v. ver. 6, 11. most people are ignorant, and at a loss to conjecture, what may be the meaning of חלתי: the Seventy and the Vulgate render it *elatas* (elatas) or the downy substance in which the dates are involved; nor is this translation very different from the Arabic, which renders it the *branch of the palm-tree from which the dates depend*. But what relation can this bear to the human hair? I answer, the resemblance is obvious to any person, who has seen the object of the comparison, or has remarked the plate of it annexed to the notes on *Theophrastus's History of Plants* by JO. BUDEUS.—But how is Solomon consistent, in the same verse speaking of raven locks, and a golden head?

“ His head is of pure gold,

“ The locks of which resemble the branches of the palm-tree,

“ And black as the raven.”

To reconcile this difficulty, it is necessary to know, that although the Orientals may possibly admire *raven locks* in their natural state, yet they are accustomed to dye them with *benna* (so they call the oil of privet) in order to give them a yellow or golden cast: this is an ancient custom, though the existence of it among the Hebrews may be disputed; but probably for this same purpose they might make use of gold dust, as the Latins are known to have done.

With the same *benna* they stain the countenance, as well as the hands and arms, which first changes them to an azure blue, and they grow yellow by degrees; and this they esteem a great object of beauty, though it would

be accounted deformity with us.—This observation will enable us to understand better some phrases in the 14th and 15th verses of the same chapter :

- “ His hands are as gold rings
- “ Inlaid with chrysolite :
- “ His belly as plates of ivory,
- “ Inclosed in sapphire :
- “ His legs are as columns of marble
- “ Upon a base of gold.”

The fingers being stained with *henna*, appeared as if they had gold rings on, set with chrysolite; which gem was formerly of a yellow colour. I say formerly, because the same stone which we call the *topaz* was the ancient chrysolite. (See HILL's *Hist. of Fossils*.) But if by the word *tarshish* we understand the ancient hyacinth or amethyst, an azure colour will then be alluded to, which the same henna produces on the skin. The whiteness of the body, covered with a delicate purple vest, is finely compared to ivory overlaid with sapphire. *Sheesh* is without doubt figured marble: to which the legs and thighs are compared, from the blue and serpentine veins which run along them, and which are more pellucid in proportion to the fineness of the skin. The bases are golden slippers.

The 5th verse of the viith chapter is among the most difficult. The head of the king's daughter is compared to the pyramidal top of Carmel, covered with thick trees, by which simile is, I apprehend, intimated the quantity and beauty of her hair. The word *dallat* also occurs for hair, in the explanation of which commentators have been greatly perplexed; some, led away by a whimsical etymology, have supposed it to mean *thin hair*, as if this could

could possibly be a subject of flattery to a young lady. In my opinion, the word is derived from the Arabic, as well as the Chaldaic word רליל (the fringe of a garment or tent) and means any thing pendant, or hanging loose. The hair is compared to purple, not however, I think, on account of the colour: for the henna, with which they stained their hair, makes it yellow, not purple: I suspect some allusion is rather intended to the animal which produces purple. That animal is of a pyramidal form, rising beautifully in a spiral cone, whence it is called *aregman*, from its likeness to the stone monuments. There follows מלך אסור ברחשי, which, with some degree of hesitation, I venture to translate, "as a king encircled with a diadem:" the Septuagint has it, *ὡς πορφύρα βασιλεως, περιδεδυμένη εὐλομασσοις*. The upright Oriental tiara is alluded to, the mark of royalty, which is more noble the higher it is. Thus the verse may be explained, and it will then be found to present a just picture of the Oriental head-dress:

- "Thine head resembles Carmel:
- "And thine hair is raised like the shell of the purple,
- "Like a king encircled with diadems."

In the latter verses of the same chapter there is an elegant description of Spring, but what chiefly creates difficulty is the *dudaim*, which are said to produce odours. The famous CELSIUS, in his *Sacred Botany*, seems to have been peculiarly unfortunate on this subject. The word is translated *mandragora* (or mandrake) on the most ancient authority: but Celsius cannot allow this plant any place in a love poem, because it has in reality a bad smell. The text explained from the Arabic is, "The mandrakes produce a *strong* odour." We

must remember, that it was the opinion of all the Orientals, that the mandrake was of especial efficacy in love potions; the truth of which opinion is of no concern to us, if we only allow it to have been the general opinion of the Eastern nations. The text therefore implies, "The mandrake will breathe its strong and somniferous odours, and provoke to love." M.

SUCH a diversity of opinions has prevailed in the learned world concerning the nature and design of the Song of Job, that the only one in which commentators seem to agree is the extreme obscurity of the subject.

LECTURE XXXII.

OF THE POEM OF JOB.

In order to criticise the book of Job with any degree of satisfaction to his auditors, the critic must explain his own sentiments concerning the work in general.—The book of Job a singular composition, and has little or no connexion with the affairs of the Hebrews.—The seat of the history is Idumæa; and the characters are evidently Idumæan of the family of Abraham; the author appears to be an Idumæan, who spoke the Hebrew as his vernacular tongue.—Neither Elihu nor Moses, rather Job himself, or some contemporary.—This appears to be the oldest book extant: founded upon true history, and contains no allegory.—Although extremely obscure, still the general subject and design are sufficiently evident.—A short and general analysis of the whole work; in which the obscurer passages are brought as little as possible in question.—The deductions from this disquisition—1. The subject of the controversy between Job and his friends.—2. The subject of the whole Poem.—3. Its end or purpose.—All questions not necessarily appertaining to this point to be avoided.

SUCH a diversity of opinions has prevailed in the learned world concerning the nature and design of the Poem of Job, that the only point in which commentators seem to agree, is the extreme obscurity of the subject.

subject. To engage, therefore, in an undertaking on which so much erudition has been expended, to tread the same paths which so many have already traversed in vain, may seem to require some apology for the temerity, not to say the presumption of the attempt. Though I might alledge, that the authority of the most learned men is lessened in some measure by the discordance of their opinions; and that therefore the failure of others is the more readily to be excused; I will, however, make use of no such defence, but will entrench myself rather in the necessity and in the nature of my present undertaking. I pretend not to any new discoveries; I presume not to determine the subtile controversies of the learned; I scarcely venture to indulge the hope of being able to illustrate any obscurities. My sole intention is to collect, from such passages as appear the least intricate, the most probable conjectures: and what I conceive to have any tolerable foundation in fact, that I mean to propose, not as demonstration, but as opinion only. I proceed in this manner upon the principle, that, considering the great discordance of sentiments upon this subject, it would be impossible

impossible for any man to discourse with a sufficient degree of accuracy and perspicuity upon the structure and parts of this poem, unless he previously explained his own ideas concerning the scope and purport of the work in general.

The book of Job appears to me to stand single and unparalleled in the Sacred Volume. It seems to have little connexion with the other writings of the Hebrews, and no relation whatever to the affairs of the Israelites. The scene is laid in Idumæa¹; the history of

¹ The information which the learned have endeavoured to collect from the writings and geography of the Greeks concerning the country and residence of Job and his friends, appears to me so very inconclusive, that I am inclined to take a quite different method for the solution of this question, by applying solely to the Sacred Writings: the hints with which they have furnished me towards the illustration of this subject, I shall explain as briefly as possible.

The land of Uz, or Gnutz, is evidently Idumæa, as appears from LAM. iv. 21. Uz was the grandson of Seir, the Horite: GEN. xxxvi. 20, 21, 28. 1 CHRON. i. 38, 42. Seir inhabited that mountainous tract which was called by his name antecedent to the time of Abraham, but his posterity being expelled, it was occupied by the Idumæans: GEN. xiv. 6. DEUT. ii. 12. Two other
men

of an inhabitant of that country is the basis of the narrative; the characters who speak are

men are mentioned of the name *Uz*; one the grandson of Shem, the other the son of Nachor, the brother of Abraham; but whether any district was called after their name is not clear. Idumæa is a part of Arabia Petræa, situated on the southern extremity of the tribe of Judah: NUMB. xxxiv. 3. JOSH. xv. 1, 21. the land of Uz therefore appears to have been between Egypt and Philistia. JER. xxv. 20. where the order of the places seems to have been accurately observed in reviewing the different nations from Egypt to Babylon; and the same people seem again to be described in exactly the same situations, JER. xlv. 1.

Children of the East or *Eastern people*, seems to have been the general appellation for that mingled race of people (as they are called, JER. xxv. 20.) who inhabited between Egypt and the Euphrates, bordering upon Judea from the South to the East; the Idumæans, the Amalekites, the Midianites, the Moabites, the Ammonites; see JUD. vi. 3. and ISA. xi. 14. of these the Idumæans and Amalekites certainly possessed the southern parts; see NUMB. xxxiv. 3. xiii. 29. 1 SAM. xxvii. 8, 10. This appears to be the true state of the case: the whole region between Egypt and Euphrates was called the East, at first in respect to Egypt (where the learned Jos. Mede thinks the Israelites acquired this mode of speaking. MEDE'S *Works*, p. 580.) and afterwards absolutely and without any relation to situation or circumstances. Abraham is said to have sent the sons of his concubines, Hagar and Keturah, "Eastward, to the country which is commonly called the East." GEN. xxv. 6. where the name of the region

are Idumæans, or at least Arabians of the adjacent country, all originally of the race of

region seems to have been derived from the same situation. Solomon is reported "to have excelled in wisdom all the Eastern people, and all Egypt:" 1 KINGS iv. 30. that is, all the neighbouring people on that quarter: for there were people beyond the boundaries of Egypt, and bordering on the south of Judea, who were famous for wisdom, namely, the Idumæans, (see JER. xlix. 7. OB. 8.) to whom we may well believe this passage might have some relation. Thus JEHOVAH addresses the Babylonians: "Arise, ascend unto Kedar, and lay waste the children of the East," JER. xlix. 28. notwithstanding these were really situated to the west of Babylon. Although Job, therefore, be accounted one of the Orientals, it by no means follows, that his residence must be in Arabia Deserta.

Eliphaz the Temanite: Eliphaz was the son of Esau, and Teman the son of Eliphaz: GEN. xxxvi. 10, 11. the Eliphaz of Job was without a doubt of this race. Teman is certainly a city of Idumæa: JER. xlix. 7, 20. EZEK. xxv. 13. AMOS i. 11, 12. OB. 8, 9.

Bildad the Shubite: Shuah was one of the sons of Abraham by Keturah, whose posterity were numbered among the people of the East, and his situation was probably contiguous to that of his brother, Midian, and of his nephews, Shebah and Dedan: see GEN. xxv. 2, and 3. Dedan is a city of Idumæa: JER. xlix. 8. and seems to have been situated on the eastern side, as Teman was on the west, EZEK. xxv. 13. From Sheba originated the Sabæans in the passage from Arabia Felix to the Red Sea:

Sheba

of Abraham. The language is pure Hebrew, although the author appears to be an Idumæan ;

Sheba is united to Midian, ISA. lx. 6. it is in the same region however with Midian, and not far from Mount Horeb, EXOD. ii. 15. iii. 1.

Zophar the Naamathite : among the cities, which by lot fell to the tribe of Judah, in the neighbourhood of Idumæa, Naama is enumerated, JOSH. xv. 21, 41. Nor does this name elsewhere occur : this probably was the country of Zophar.

Elibu the Buzite : Buz occurs but once as the name of a place or country, JER. xxv. 23. where it is mentioned along with Dedan and Thema : Dedan, as was just now demonstrated, is a city of Idumæa ; Thema belonged to the children of Ishmael, who are said to have inhabited from Havilah, even to Shur, which is in the district of Egypt, GEN. xxv. 15, 18. Saul, however, is said to have smitten the Amalekites from Havilah even to Shur, which is in the district of Egypt ; 1 SAM. xv. 7. Havilah cannot, therefore, be very far from the boundaries of the Amalekites ; but the Amalekites never exceeded the boundaries of Arabia Petræa. (See RELAND Palæstin. lib. i. c. xiv.) Thema, therefore, lay somewhere between Havilah and the desert of Shur, to the southward of Judea. Thema is also mentioned in connexion with Sheba, JOB vi. 19.

Upon a fair review of these facts I think we may venture to conclude, still with that modesty which such a question demands, that JOB was an inhabitant of Arabia Petræa, as well as his friends, or at least of that neighbourhood. To this solution one objection may be raised :

it

mæan; for it is not improbable that all the posterity of Abraham, Israelites, Idumæans, and Arabians, whether of the family of Ke-

it may be asked, how the Chaldeans, who lived on the borders of the Euphrates, could make depredations on the camels of Job, who lived in Idumæa at so great a distance. This too is thought a sufficient cause for assigning Job a situation in Arabia Deserta, and not far from the Euphrates. But what should prevent the Chaldeans, as well as the Sabæans, a people addicted to rapine, and roving about at immense distances for the sake of plunder, from wandering through these defenceless regions, which were divided into tribes and families rather than into nations, and pervading from Euphrates even to Egypt? Further, I would ask on the other hand, whether it be probable that all the friends of Job, who lived in Idumæa and its neighbourhood, should instantly be informed of all that could happen to Job in the desert of Arabia and on the confines of Chaldea, and immediately repair thither? Or whether it be reasonable to think, that, some of them being inhabitants of Arabia Deserta, it should be concerted among them to meet at the residence of Job; since it is evident, that Eliphaz lived at Theman, in the extreme parts of Idumæa? With respect to the *Aisitas* of Ptolemy (for so it is written, and not *Ausitas*) it has no agreement, not so much as in a single letter with the Hebrew *Gnutz*. The LXX. indeed call that country by the name *Ausitida*, but they describe it as situated in Idumæa; and they account Job himself an Idumæan, and a descendant of Esau. See the Appendix of the LXX. to the book of Job, and HYDE, Not. in *Peritzol.* chap. xi.

Author's Note.

turah

turah or Ishmael, spoke for a considerable length of time one common language. That the Idumæans, however, and the Temanites in particular, were eminent for the reputation of wisdom, appears by the testimony of the prophets, Jeremiah and Obadiah²: Baruch also particularly mentions them amongst "the authors (or expounders) of fables, and searchers out of understanding³." The learned are very much divided in their sentiments concerning the author of this book. Our Lightfoot conjectures, that it is the production of Elihu; and this conjecture seems at first sight rather countenanced by the exordium to the first speech of Elihu⁴, in which he seems to assume the character of the author, by continuing the narrative in his own person. That passage, however, which appears to interrupt the speech of Elihu, and to be a part of the narrative, is, I apprehend, nothing more than an apostrophe to Job, or possibly to himself; for it manifestly consists of two distichs, while, on the contrary, it is well

² JER. xlix. 7. OB. 8.

³ BARUCH iii. 22, 23.

⁴ JOB xxxii. 15, 16.

known that all the narrative parts, all in which the author himself appears are certainly written in prose. Another opinion, which has been still more generally received, attributes the work to Moses. This conjecture, however, for I cannot dignify it with any higher appellation, will be found to rest altogether upon another, namely, that this poem was originally a consolatory address to the Israelites, and an allegorical representation of their situation: and I must confess, I can scarcely conceive any thing more futile than such an hypothesis, since it is impossible to trace, throughout the whole book, the slightest allusion to the manners, customs, ceremonies, or history of the Israelites. I will add, moreover, that the style of Job appears to me materially different from the poetical style of Moses; for it is much more compact, concise, or condensed, more accurate in the poetical conformation of the sentences: as may be observed also in the prophecies of Balaam, the Mesopotamian, a foreigner indeed with respect to the Israelites, but neither unacquainted with their language, nor with the worship of the true God. I confess myself therefore, on the whole, more

inclined to favour the opinion of those who suppose Job himself, or some contemporary, to be the author of this poem: for that it is the most ancient of all the sacred books, is, I think, manifest, from the subject, the language, the general character, and even from the obscurity of the work^s. Concern-
ing

^s In opposition to the antiquity of the poem, and to what I have urged above, that it appears to have no connexion with, or relation to the affairs of the Israelites, appeals have been made to JOB xxxi. 28. See *A free and candid Examination of the Bishop of London's Sermon, Anonymous*, p. 165. In which the author enquires, "In what nation upon earth idolatry was ever accounted a crime but under the Jewish economy?" His argument is proposed as unanswerable, and is thought to be sufficiently confirmed by the authority of Mr. LOCKE. I will however appeal to a higher authority than that of LOCKE, namely, that of reason and the sacred writings; and will answer the question in a few words: under the Patriarchal Economy, in every tribe and family under Abraham, Melchizedeck, Job, and the rest. On the increase of idolatry Abraham was called by the divine command from Chaldea, to the end, that from him should proceed a nation separate from all others, who should worship the true God, should afford a perfect example of pure religion, and bear testimony against the worship of vain gods. Was is not, therefore, the duty of Abraham, who in his own tribe or family possessed all the attributes of sovereignty, to punish idolatry as well as homicide,

ing the time also in which Job lived, although not directly specified, I see no great room

side, adultery, or other heinous crimes? Was it not the duty of Melchizedek, of Job, of all those patriarchal princes, who regarded the worship of the true God, sedulously to prevent every defection from it; to restrain those who were disposed to forsake it, and to punish the obstinate and the rebellious? In fact, in this allusion to the exertion of the judicial authority against idolatry, and against the particular species which is mentioned here, namely, the worship of the Sun and Moon (the earliest species of idolatry) consists the most complete proof of the antiquity of the poem, and the decisive mark of the patriarchal age. But if it should be suspected, that the ingenuity of the poet might lead him to imitate with accuracy the manners of the age which he describes, this indeed would be more to the purpose, and a more plausible argument against the antiquity of the poem: but I cannot possibly attribute such address and refinement to a poet in a barbarous age; and after the Babylonish captivity. Further than this, the style of the poem savours altogether of the antique; insomuch, that whoever could suppose it written after the Babylonish captivity, would fall little short of the error of Hardouin, who ascribed the golden verses of Virgil, Horace, &c. to the *iron age* of monkish pedantry and ignorance.

With regard to the other difficulty, the solution of which appears so embarrassing, namely, how any person not acquainted with the Jewish economy could assert, that "God visits the sins of the fathers upon the chil-

reason for doubt. The length of his life evinces that he was before Moses, and probably contemporary with the Patriarchs. Not however to dwell upon the innumerable hypotheses of the learned on this subject, I will only mention, that there is the utmost probability of his having lived prior to the promulgation of the law, from the nature of the sacrifice which he institutes conformably to the command of God, namely, seven oxen and seven rams; for it is plain from the example of Balaam, that a respect for that number prevailed in those countries, and at that period, from the traditional accounts which were still preserved among them of the seven days of creation⁶. The truth of
of

"dren," JOB xxi. 19. ? Let the *candid observer* for the present content himself with this verse of Horace :

"Delicta majorum immeritus lues,

"Romane."——

"Though guiltless of thy father's crimes,

"Roman, 'tis thine, to latest times,

"The vengeance of the gods to bear."—

FRANCIS.

Author's Note.

⁶ JOB xlii. 8. Compare NUMB. xxiii. 1, &c.

There seems to be but little weight in this reasoning, because

of the narrative would never, I am persuaded, have been called in question, but from the immoderate affection of some allegorizing mystics for their own fictions, which run to such excess, as to prevent them from acceding to any thing but what was visionary and typical. When I speak of the poem as founded in fact, I would be understood no further than concerns the general subject of the narrative, for I apprehend all the dialogue, and most likely some other parts, have partaken largely of the embellishments of poetry; but I cannot allow that this has by any means extended so far as to convert the whole into an allegory. Indeed I have not been able to trace any vestige of an allegorical meaning throughout the entire poem. And should even the exordium be suspected to be of this nature⁷, we must recollect, that the historical books are not destitute of

cause Job, as an Idumæan, might have been a worshipper of the true God, like Balaam the Mesopotamian; and therefore, though the law had been given to the Israelites, continued, notwithstanding, to offer sacrifice according to the traditionary mode of his progenitors. S. H.

⁷ JOB i. 6, &c. ii. 1, &c. Compare 1 KINGS xxii. 19—22.

similar narratives¹. The exordium and conclusion I agree are distinct from the Poem itself,

It has long been a dispute among the learned, whether the Poem of Job consists of fable or a true history: this question, if authority alone be applied to, must long since have been decided in favour of those who assert it to be a real history.

With me I confess, on the other hand, it is no longer matter of opinion, but I feel very little doubt that the subject of the Poem is altogether fabulous, and designed to teach us that “the rewards of virtue being in another state, it is very possible for the good to suffer afflictions in this life: but that when it so happens, it is permitted by Providence for the wisest reasons, though they may not be obvious to human eyes.” But before I proceed to examine the grounds of this opinion, it may be necessary to premise a few remarks in reply to those who may think the divine authority of the book affected by the supposition of its not being founded in fact. For my own part, I cannot conceive that the sanctity, the dignity, or the utility of that book will be in the least affected, though we should suppose no such person as Job had ever existed.

If moral precepts, conveyed in the garb of fabulous narrations, allure the hearers by the pleasure they afford, if they strike the mind more forcibly, are more easily understood, and better retained than abstract sentiments, I see no reason why this mode of writing should be deemed unworthy of inspiration. Indeed, on the contrary, we find it made use of by Christ himself, nor does it at all derogate from his force as a moral teacher, that the good Samaritan,

itself, and stand in the place of an argument or illustration; that they are however
coeval

tan, the rich man and Lazarus, &c. were not real persons.

I shall not however rest here; for I assert further, that the book of Job is more instructive as a fable, than it could possibly be as a true history. Taken as a mere relation of a matter of fact, it is necessary to suppose that the sentiments and conversations are exhibited exactly as they were spoken, and are the sentiments of mere mortals not actuated by the Spirit of God; for we find that God has reprov'd both Job and his friends as being severally mistaken. It would then be impossible to determine what was true or what false; no doctrine of religion, no precept of morality, could with certainty be deduced from these conversations. In the whole book, the historical part (and how short is that!) and the words attributed to God himself would be alone divine, or of divine authority, the rest would be all human. Considered as a fable, the case is different. The author, composing under the influence of divine inspiration, we may reasonably suppose has attributed to the fictitious characters, such sentiments as were proper and natural to their state and circumstances: we have then, in the first place, a picture of the human mind drawn by the finger of God; and in the next, we may rest satisfied that Job and his friends err only in the principal matter upon which they dispute, and only on the points for which God has reprov'd them; but that whatever is said exclusive of this is founded on divine truth; such is the mention of the angels by Eliphaz, and the assertion of Job, that there is

coeval with the poetical part, and the work of the same author, is evident, since they are

none pure among mortals. Finally, we are by these means enabled both to determine what are the sentiments which immediately meet with the approbation of God, and what are the errors which are intended to be exposed. An able writer in dialogue never fails to discover his own sentiments: as from the books of Cicero on *the nature of the Gods*, we may collect with ease what the author thought, or rather doubted upon the subject, which would have been impossible, if he had only reported the actual words of the philosophers who are supposed to have conversed on that subject.

I will now proceed freely to explain what at first I undertook to prove concerning the book in question. It is surely more becoming to consider the exordium, in which Satan appears as the accuser of Job, rather in the light of a fable than of a true narrative. It is surely incredible, that such a conversation ever took place between the Almighty and Satan, who is supposed to return with *news* from the terrestrial regions. Indeed, the commentators who have undertaken to vindicate this part of the book, have done it with so much asperity, that they seem conscious of the difficulty under which it labours.

Nor will it suffice to answer as some temperate and rational commentator, like our author, probably will, and indeed as he himself hints: that the great outline of the fact only is true; and that the exordium is set off with some poetical ornaments, among which is to be accounted the conversation between God and Satan. For on this very conversation the whole plot is founded, and the whole

are indispensibly necessary to the unravelling of the plot, which is not developed in the body

whole story and catastrophe depends. One of the best of men is thrown into so many unexpected and undeserved evils, that neither he nor his adversaries are able to conceive how it can be consistent with a benevolent Being, to plunge a good man into so great afflictions: nor has God condescended to explain the motives of it to them, but reproves them all for investigating matters beyond their reach. But the author of the book undoes the knot which is left unresolved in these conversations, and gives the reader to understand how indifferently those reason concerning the Divine Providence, and the happiness or misery of mankind, who are only partially informed of causes and events. The Almighty acts for the honour of Job, of human nature, and of piety itself; he permits Job to be unhappy for a time, and refutes the accusations of Satan even by the very means which he himself pointed out. Suppose, therefore, that what is thus related of Satan be fictitious, and all the rest true, instead of the difficulty being done away, the consequence will be, that the whole plot remains without any solution whatever. What our author has added concerning one of the historical books of Scripture, in which a similar passage occurs, 1 KINGS xxii. 19—22. appears not at all to the purpose. It is not a history related by the author, nor does the author speak in his own person, but a prophet explains a vision which he has had. But those who suppose the book of Job to be founded upon fact, allow that the historian speaks in the first and second chapters, who, if he did invent, would certainly, one would think, take

body of the poem. There are, it is true, phrases extant in the exordium, in which
some

take that liberty only in matters which did not affect the great scope of the history, and not in a matter which, if it be supposed fictitious, reduces the whole book to nothing.

Moreover, the style of the whole book being poetical, and so sublime, that I defy any man to imitate it in any extempore effusion, is an irrefragable proof in favour of my opinion. Our author indeed pleads a very specious excuse: he thinks that the conversation and speeches of the different characters have been poetically ornamented. And this argument I do not wish to confute. There are however others who defend the historical truth of the poem in a manner not quite so modest. Among the rest, the famous SCHULTENS alledges it not to be incredible, that these are the actual words of the disputants, if we consider the amazing faculty which the Arabians possess of making extempore verses. In answer to this, I must confess, that all he can urge on this subject will never persuade me, that poetry, which is confessedly superior to all that human genius has been able to produce, is nothing more than an extempore effusion. Indeed nothing can be more ridiculous, than to suppose men in circumstances of so great distress, in the midst of difficulties and afflictions, capable of amusing themselves with making extempore verses.

These objections which I have just stated are well known to the commentators: but there are others not quite so common, which induce me to suppose the subject of this poem not historical but fabulous. So many
round

some critics have pretended to discover the hand of a later writer; the arguments, however,

round numbers and multiplications of them occur in the life of Job, as to be quite incompatible with mere chance. *Ten* children perish, *seven* sons (which though it be not a round number, is yet held sacred and mysterious by the Orientals) and three daughters: 7000 sheep, 3000 camels, 1000 oxen, and exactly half the number of asses. In lieu of these there are restored to him, 14,000 sheep, 6000 camels, 2000 oxen, and 1000 asses, exactly the duplicate of the former numbers; together with exactly the same number of children as he had lost, seven sons and three daughters, and these from one wife. The same principle is found to extend to the years of Job's prosperity, which are multiplications of the number 70. These circumstances betray art and fiction in the narrator, who has introduced these round numbers which we know are the first to present themselves to the mind: it bears no appearance of chance or casualty, which, when it predominates in a series of events, produces a wonderful variety, but very little of regularity or equality. The name of Job too, which in the Arabic means returning to God, and loving him, and hating whatever is contrary to him, is so adapted to the character of his latter years, that we can never suppose it a name given to him by his parents, but invented by the author of the story.

A fourth argument is, that the scene is laid in Arabia, yet the poem abounds so much in imagery borrowed from Egypt, that it is plain that country must have been extremely well known to the author, and indeed predomi-

nant

ever; of these critics I cannot esteem of any great force or importance.

That

nant in his mind, as I have endeavoured to prove in a Dissertation recited before the R. S. of Gottingen.

But the most powerful of all proofs is, that some things appear in the book of Job which could not possibly have place in a true history. At a period when the longevity of the Patriarchs was reduced within the limit of two hundred years, Job is said to have lived 140 years after his malady, and therefore could not be very ancient when he fell into this malady: nevertheless he upbraids his friends with their *youth* (who by the way could not be very young, since Elihu in xxxii. 6, 7, 9. reverences their hoary age) and adds, that "he would have disdained to set their *fathers* with the dogs of his flock," ch. xxx. 1. But what is more extraordinary, these same men boast of their own age, and seem to exact a degree of reverence from Job as their junior: thus Eliphaz, chap. xx. 10. "With us are both the grey-headed and the very aged men much older than thy father." These passages, therefore, so directly contradict each other, that they cannot be connected with true history. The opprobrium which he casts upon the birth of his friends seems also an inconsistency, ch. xxx. 1—6. as it is incredible, that so noble and rich a man should ever have chosen his friends from the meanest of the people.

It remains only to remove one objection, with which those who contend for the historical truth of the book of Job may press us. Job is quoted by Ezekiel along with Noah and Daniel, whom we know to have been real persons, and they are proposed by James as an example of

patience,

That these points should be accounted of a very ambiguous nature, and should cause much

patience, EZEK. xiv. 14, 20. JAMES v. 11. as if it were improper or indecent to recommend the virtues of fictitious characters to our imitation, or as if this were not in fact the end of delineating such characters. Neither is there the least impropriety in instancing the same virtues in real and fictitious characters. Suppose a father to recommend to his daughters the examples of Lucretia and Pamela, as models of chastity and virtue, who would esteem such a discourse reprehensible, or think that it either took from the truth of the history, or gave a reality to the fiction?

To return to the point from which we set out: this poem seems to treat of the affliction which may sometimes happen to good men, at the same time that the author seems to wish to accommodate the consolation to the people of God, and to represent their oppression under the character of Job. To this opinion it is objected by our author, that there appears nothing in the book like an allusion to the manners, rites, or affairs of the Israelites. Of the latter I shall treat, when we come to speak of the application of this poem to the history of the Israelites. As to the manners, they are what I call *Abrahamic*, or such as were at that period common to all the seed of Abraham at that time, Israelites, Ishmaelites, and Idumeans. But perhaps it may be thought necessary to instance those customs which were peculiar to the Israelites, and by which they were distinguished from the Arabians: this, however, would not display much judgment in the author of a poem, the scene of which lies in Arabia; besides, that

much embarrassment and controversy in the learned world, is nothing extraordinary ; but that

that most of the peculiar customs of the Israelites, those I mean which distinguished them from the other descendants of Abraham, were either derived from the Egyptians, or were taught them by Moses : and who would require, that such things as the Paschal Lamb, and the Mosaic Feasts and Priesthood, should be introduced into such a poem ? The frequent allusions however to the country and the productions of Egypt abundantly answer this objection. Insomuch, that though the scene is laid in Arabia, one would imagine the actors had been Egyptians. Nor are there wanting allusions to the circumstances of the Israelites. These like Job lost their children and possessions by the tyranny of Pharaoh : and, if I am not mistaken, the disease is the same which affected Job, with that which prevailed among the Egyptians by the command of Moses.

From these circumstances I am much inclined to the opinion which attributes this book to Moses. For is it to be imagined, that a native of Idumea should crowd his poem with images and figures borrowed from Egypt ? Or what native of Arabia (for it must be allowed that the book of Job has some allusions peculiar to Arabia) was so likely to intermingle the imagery of both countries as Moses ? To these may be added the allusions to the *isles of the blessed*, which are common to the book of Job and the Mosaic writings. I am well aware that there is more of the tragic, more of strong poetic feeling in this book, than in the other relics of Mosaic poetry, which has induced our author to remark the discrepancy of style. But how

that the main object and design of the poem should ever have been called in question, may justly

how different are the language and sentiments of a man raging in the heights of despair, from those which are to be sung in the temple of God? We must also remember, that the poetic style of an author in the flower of his youth is very different from that of his latter days. If Moses were really the author of this Poem, he composed it about the age of forty years; but the rest of his poems were written between the 85th and 120th year of his age; at which period I am often surprized to meet with so much vigour of language and sentiment: and no other difference of style have I been able to discover. M.

If I might flatter myself that the reader would not be wearied with replications and rejoinders, I would request his attention to a few animadversions on these remarks of the Gottingen professor. For though I thought it my duty to state his arguments as fully as I could, consistently with the limits of this work, I must confess that I do not myself feel by any means convinced; nor dare I venture to affirm, upon any such presumptive proofs, that the book of Job is altogether fabulous. I think it by no means follows, that because a book contains some things which may with propriety be termed poetical fictions, it has no foundation whatever in fact. The poems of Homer contain more fictions of this kind than any commentator has pretended clearly to discover in the book of Job: and yet no sober critic has denied, that there ever was such an event as the Trojan war, on which those poems are founded.

I cannot

justly excite our astonishment. For though many passages be confessedly obscure, though there

I cannot help thinking with our author, that such a man as Job might very possibly have existed, and that the leading facts concerning his sudden depression and consequent misfortunes might really have happened; and yet that the poet, in relating these facts, may have added such machinery, and other poetical ornaments, as appeared necessary to enliven the story, and illustrate the moral. Though we should not contend with the learned Professor for the literal acceptance of the exordium; though we should even admit with him, that it is not probable any such conversation ever took place between the Almighty Governor of the universe and the great enemy of mankind, as is related in the first chapter; yet it by no means follows, that the inspired writer had no grounds whatever for what he describes perhaps poetically. The manner in which the Deity and the other celestial intelligences are spoken of in this poem appears necessary, when the human mind is called upon to contemplate their actions, and may be considered as a kind of personification in accommodation to our limited faculties, and is common in many other parts of Scripture.

With regard to the objection founded on the round numbers, I think it very weak when applied to the children of Job: and as to the cattle, the event being recorded some time after it took place, it is hardly reasonable to expect that the numbers should be specified with the utmost exactness: indeed nothing could be more awkward or ungraceful, in a poetical narration, than to descend to units; and when the numbers are doubled at the conclusion,

there be several which I fear no human skill
will ever be able to unravel; and though the
obscurity

fion, I look upon it as no more than a periphrasis, expressing, that the Lord gave to Job twice as much as he had before.

As to the name: it is well known, that all the names of the ancients were derived from some distinguishing quality, and not always given at their birth as with us. (See *Essays Historical and Moral*, Ess. vi. p. 119.) Nay the objection, if admitted, would strike at the authority of a considerable part of holy writ; for not only many of the persons recorded there take their names from circumstances which occurred late in life, but, in some instances, from the very circumstances of their deaths, as *Abel* from *Habal* (vanity or nothingness) because he left no offspring.

There appears at first sight something more formidable in the argument founded on the inconsistencies which he boasts of having detected; nevertheless, I can by no means grant it all the credit which its author seems to claim. Both the expressions of *Elihu*, and those of the other friends are very general, and I think improperly applied by the professor: for the passage referred to, ch. xv. 10. by no means proves that the friends of Job were older than he: "*with us, or among us,*" seems to imply no more than this, "*older persons than either you or we,*" "*are with us, or of our sentiments.*" Still more general is the complaint of Job, ch. xxx. 1. indeed so general, that to a fair examiner it is impossible it should appear to have any relation at all to the friends of Job, as he is simply complaining of his altered state, and among other

obscurity consist chiefly in the connexion of the incidents and the sentiments, it by no means necessarily follows, that the whole is involved in impenetrable darkness. The case indeed is far otherwise, for one and the same light, though at intervals overcast, shines on through the whole, and, like a conducting star, uniformly leads to the same point. If then any person will follow this guidance without perplexing himself with obscurities which he will occasionally meet, I have very little doubt but that he will clearly discern the end, the subject, the connexion, and arrangement of the whole work. It will, perhaps, be worth while to put to trial the efficacy of this maxim: let us, therefore, for evils mentions the loss of that respect which he was accustomed to receive from all ranks of people, insomuch, that now even the *young*, the *children*, presume to hold him in derision. The other argument is by no means conclusive, namely, that which is founded on the supposed opprobrium on the birth of his friends, as really I cannot conceive any part of this speech to have the least reference to them; or if it have, it is easy enough to suppose, that their fathers or themselves might have been raised to opulence from a mean station; and indeed such a supposition is absolutely necessary to give any point to the sarcasm of Job, admitting that it ought to be understood in the light our commentator seems to intend. T.
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the present, pass over those obscurities which might impede our progress; and, making the best use of those lights which are afforded by the more obvious passages, proceed with an attentive eye through the whole of the work, and observe whether something satisfactory is not to be discovered relating to the subject of the narrative, and the design and intent of the poem.

The principal object held forth to our contemplation in this production is the example of a good man, eminent for his piety, and of approved integrity, suddenly precipitated from the very summit of prosperity into the lowest depths of misery and ruin: who having been first bereaved of his wealth, his possessions, and his children, is afterwards afflicted with the most excruciating anguish of a loathsome disease which entirely covers his body. He sustains all however with the mildest submission, and the most complete resignation to the will of Providence: "In all this," says the historian, "Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." And after the second trial, "In all

⁹ JOB i. 22.

B b 2

" this

“ this did not Job sin with his lips ¹⁰.”

The author of the history remarks upon this circumstance a second time, in order to excite the observation of the reader, and to render him more attentive to what follows, which properly constitutes the true subject of the poem: namely, the conduct of Job with respect to his reverence for the Almighty, and the changes which accumulating misery might produce in his temper and behaviour. Accordingly we find that another still more exquisite trial of his patience yet awaits him, and which indeed, as the writer seems to intimate, he scarcely appears to have sustained with equal firmness, namely, the unjust suspicions, the bitter reproaches, and the violent altercations of his friends, who had visited him on the pretence of affording consolation. Here commences the plot or action of the Poem: for when, after a long silence of all parties, the grief of Job breaks forth into passionate exclamations, and a vehement execration on the day of his birth, the minds of his friends are suddenly exasperated, their intentions are changed, and their

¹⁰ JOB ii. 10.

consolation,

consolation, if indeed they originally intended any, is converted into contumely and reproaches. The first of these three singular comforters reproves his impatience; calls in question his integrity, by indirectly insinuating that God does not inflict such punishments upon the righteous; and finally, admonishes him, that the chastisement of God is not to be despised. The next of them, not less intemperate in his reproofs, takes it for granted, that the children of Job had only received the reward due to their offences; and with regard to himself, intimates, that if he be innocent, and will apply with proper humility to the divine mercy, he may be restored. The third upbraids him with arrogance, with vanity, and even with falsehood, because he has presumed to defend himself against the unjust accusations of his companions; and exhorts him to a sounder mode of reasoning and a more holy life. They all, with a manifest, though indirect allusion to Job, discourse very copiously concerning the divine judgments which are always openly displayed against the wicked, and of the certain destruction of hypocritical pretenders to virtue and religion. In reply to

this, Job enumerates his sufferings, and complains bitterly of the inhumanity of his friends, and of the severity which he has experienced from the hand of God; he calls to witness both God and man, that he is unjustly oppressed; he intimates, that he is weak in comparison with God, that the contention is consequently unequal, and that be his cause ever so righteous he cannot hope to prevail. He expostulates with God himself still more vehemently, and with greater freedom, affirming, that he does not discriminate characters, but equally afflicts the just and the unjust. The expostulations of Job serve only to irritate still more the resentment of his pretended friends; they reproach him in severer terms with pride, impiety, passion, and madness; they repeat the same arguments respecting the justice of God, the punishment of the wicked, and their certain destruction after a short period of apparent prosperity. This sentiment they confidently pronounce to be confirmed both by their experience and by that of their fathers; and they maliciously exaggerate the ungrateful topic by the most splendid imagery and the most forcible language. On the part of
Job,

Job, the general scope of the argument is much the same as before, but the expression is considerably heightened; it consists of appeals to the Almighty, asseverations of his own innocence, earnest expostulations, complaints of the cruelty of his friends, melancholy reflections on the vanity of human life, and upon his own severe misfortunes, ending in grief and desperation: he affirms, however, that he places his ultimate hope and confidence in God; and the more vehemently his adversaries urge, that the wicked only are objects of the divine wrath, and obnoxious to punishment, so much the more resolutely does Job assert their perpetual impunity, prosperity, and happiness even to the end of their existence¹¹. The first of his opponents, Eliphaz, incensed by this assertion, descends directly to open crimination and contumely; he accuses the most upright of men of the most atrocious crimes, of injustice, rapine, and oppression; inveighs against him as an impious pretender to virtue and religion, and with a kind of far-

¹¹ Chap. xxi. and xxiv. are indeed obscure; the opinion, however, of Schultens on this subject appears to me more than probable. *Author's Note.*

castic benevolence exhorts him to penitence. Vehemently affected with this reproof, Job, in a still more animated and confident strain, appeals to the tribunal of All-seeing Justice; and wishes it were only permitted him to plead his cause in the presence of God himself. He complains still more intemperately of the unequal treatment of Providence; exults in his own integrity, and then more tenaciously maintains his former opinion concerning the impunity of the wicked. To this another of the triumvirate, Bildad, replies, by a masterly, though concise dissertation on the majesty and sanctity of the Divine Being, indirectly rebuking the presumption of Job, who has dared to question his decrees. In reply to Bildad, Job demonstrates himself no less expert at wielding the weapons of satire and ridicule, than those of reason and argument; and reverting to a more serious tone, he displays the infinite power and wisdom of God more copiously, and more poetically than the former speaker. The third of the friends making no return, and the others remaining silent, Job at length opens the true sentiments of his heart concerning the fate of the wicked; he allows
that

that their prosperity is unstable, and that they and their descendants shall at last experience on a sudden, that God is the avenger of iniquity. In all this, however, he contends that the divine counsels do not admit of human investigation; but that the chief wisdom of man consists in the fear of God. He beautifully descants upon his former prosperity; and exhibits a striking contrast between it and his present affliction and debasement. Lastly, in answer to the crimination of Eliphaz, and the implications of the others, he relates the principal transactions of his past life; he asserts his integrity as displayed in all the duties of life, and in the fight of God and man; and again appeals to the justice and omniscience of God in attestation of his veracity.

If these circumstances be fairly collected from the general tenour and series of the work, as far as we are able to trace them through the plainer and more conspicuous passages, it will be no very difficult task to explain and define the subject of this part of the poem, which contains the dispute between Job and his friends. The argument seems chiefly to relate to the piety and integrity

grity of Job, and turns upon this point, whether he, who by the Divine Providence and visitation is so severely punished and afflicted, ought to be accounted pious and innocent. This leads into a more extensive field of controversy, into a dispute indeed, which less admits of any definition or limit, concerning the nature of the divine counsels, in the dispensations of happiness and misery in this life. The antagonists of Job in this dispute observing him exposed to such severe visitations, conceiving that this affliction has not fallen upon him unmeritedly, accuse him of hypocrisy, and falsely ascribe to him the guilt of some atrocious but concealed offence. Job, on the contrary, conscious of no crime, and wounded by their unjust suspicions, defends his own innocence before God with rather more confidence and ardour than is commendable; and so strenuously contends for his own integrity, that he seems virtually to charge God himself with some degree of injustice.

This state of the controversy is clearly explained by what follows: for when the three friends have ceased to dispute with Job, “ be-
“ cause

“ cause he seemeth just in his own eyes ¹²,” that is, because he has uniformly contended, that there was no wickedness in himself which could call down the heavy vengeance of God; Elihu comes forward justly offended with both parties; with Job, because “ he justified himself in preference to God ¹³,” that is, because he defended so vehemently the justice of his own cause, that he seemed in some measure to arraign the justice of God; against the three friends, because, “ though they were unable to answer Job, they ceased not to condemn him ¹⁴ :” that is, they concluded in their own minds, that Job was impious and wicked, while, nevertheless, they had nothing specific to object against his assertions of his own innocence, or upon which they might safely ground their accusation.

The conduct of Elihu evidently corresponds with this state of the controversy: he professes, after a slight prefatory mention of himself, to reason with Job, unbiassed

¹² Chap. xxxii. 1.

¹³ Chap. xxxii. 2. Compare xxxv. 2. xl. 8.

¹⁴ Chap. xxxiii. 3.

equally

equally by favour or resentment. He therefore reproves Job from his own-mouth, because he had attributed too much to himself; because he had affirmed himself to be altogether free from guilt and depravity; because he had presumed to contend with God, and had not scrupled to insinuate, that the Deity was hostile to him. He asserts, that it is not necessary for God to explain and develop his counsels to men; that he nevertheless takes many occasions of admonishing them, not only by visions and revelations, but even by the visitations of his Providence, by sending calamities and diseases upon them, to repress their arrogance and reform their obduracy. He next rebukes Job, because he had pronounced himself upright, and affirmed that God had acted inimically, if not unjustly towards him, which he proves to be no less improper than indecent. In the third place, he objects to Job, that from the miseries of the good, and the prosperity of the wicked, he has falsely and perversely concluded, that there was no advantage to be derived from the practice of virtue. On the contrary he affirms, that when the afflictions of the just continue, it is because they

they do not place a proper confidence in God, ask relief at his hands, patiently expect it, nor demean themselves before him with becoming humility and submission. This observation alone, he adds very properly, is at once a sufficient reproof of the contumacy of Job, and a full refutation of the unjust suspicions of his friends ¹⁵. Lastly, he explains the purposes of the Deity in chastening men, which are in general to prove and to amend them, to repress their arrogance, to afford him an opportunity of exemplifying his justice upon the obstinate and rebellious, and of shewing favour to the humble and obedient. He supposes God to have acted in this manner towards Job; on that account he exhorts him to humble himself before his righteous Judge, to beware of appearing obstinate or contumacious in his sight, and of relapsing into a repetition of his sin. He intreats him, from the contemplation of the divine power and majesty, to endeavour to retain a proper reverence for the Almighty. To these frequently intermitted and often repeated admonitions of Elihu, Job makes no return.

¹⁵ Chap. xxxv. 4.

The oration of God himself follows that of Elihu, in which disdaining to descend to any particular explication of his divine counsels, but instancing some of the stupendous effects of his infinite power, he insists upon the same topics which Elihu had before touched upon. In the first place, having reproved the temerity of Job, he convicts him of ignorance, in being unable to comprehend the works of his creation, which were obvious to every eye; the nature and structure of the earth, the sea, the light, and the animal kingdom. He then demonstrates his weakness, by challenging him to prove his own power by emulating any single exertion of the divine energy, and then referring him to one or two of the brute creation, with which he is unable to contend—how much less therefore with the omnipotent Creator and Lord of all things, who is or can be accountable to no being whatever ¹⁶? On this Job humbly submits to the will of Providence, acknowledges his own ignorance and imbecility, and “repents “ in dust and ashes.”

¹⁶ See chap. xli. 2, 3.

On a due consideration of all these circumstances, the principal object of the poem seems to be this third and last trial of Job, from the injustice and unkindness of his accusing friends. The consequence of which is, in the first place, the anger, indignation, and contumacy of Job, and afterwards his composure, submission, and penitence. The design of the poem is, therefore, to teach men, that having a due respect to the corruption, infirmity, and ignorance of human nature, as well as to the infinite wisdom and majesty of God, they are to reject all confidence in their own strength, in their own righteousness, and to preserve on all occasions an unwavering and unsullied faith, and to submit with becoming reverence to his decrees.

I would wish it, however, to be carefully observed, that the subject of the dispute between Job and his friends differs from the subject of the poem in general: that the end of the poetical part is different from the design of the narrative at large. For although the design and subject of the poem be exactly as I have defined them, it may nevertheless be granted, that the whole history, taken together, contains an example
of

of patience, together with its reward. This point not having been treated with sufficient distinctness by the learned, I cannot help esteeming it the principal cause of the perplexity in which the subject has been involved.

I am not ignorant, that to those who enter upon this inquiry, some questions will occur, which appear to require a separate examination; since many of them, however, are chiefly connected with those passages which are acknowledged to be obscure, which have not yet been clearly explained, and which, whatever they may hereafter be found to import, are not likely to affect the truth of our conclusion, I have thought proper to omit them. Nor will I allow, that because many things yet remain ambiguous and perplexed, we are therefore to doubt of those which are more open and evident. In regard to certain more important doctrines, which some persons of distinguished learning have thought to be established by this extraordinary monument of ancient wisdom, as they either depend in a great degree on the obscure passages above-mentioned, or do not seem to contribute in the least to the main design

design of the Poem, nor to be consistent with the object of it, which I just now pointed out, I thought it still more unnecessary to introduce them in this disquisition. What I have advanced, I conceived fully adequate to the purpose of this undertaking, and a sufficient introduction to a critical examination of the composition and beauties of the poem.

LECTURE XXXIII.

THE POEM OF JOB NOT A PERFECT DRAMA.

The Poem of Job commonly accounted Dramatic; and thought by many to be of the same kind with the Greek Tragedy: this opinion examined.—A plot or fable essential to a regular drama; its definition and essential qualities according to Aristotle.—Demonstrated, that the Poem of Job does not contain any plot: its form and design more fully explained.—Compared with the Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles; with the Oedipus Coloneus; and shewn to differ entirely from both in form and manner.—It is nevertheless a most beautiful and perfect performance in its kind: it approaches very near the form of a perfect Drama; and, for regularity in form and arrangement, justly claims the first place among the poetical compositions of the Hebrews.

WHEN I undertook the present investigation, my principal object was to enable us to form some definite opinion concerning the Poem of Job, and to assign it its proper place among the compositions of the Hebrew Poets. This will possibly appear to some a superfluous and idle undertaking, as the point seems long since to have been finally determined, the majority of the critics

critics having decidedly adjudged it to belong to the dramatic class. Since, however, the term dramatic, as I formerly had reason to remark, is in itself extremely ambiguous, the present disquisition will not be confined within the limits of a single question; for the first object of inquiry will necessarily be, what idea is affixed to the appellation by those critics who term the book of Job a Dramatic Poem: and after we have determined this point (if it be possible to determine it, for they do not seem willing to be explicit) we may then with safety proceed to enquire whether, pursuant to that idea, the piece be justly entitled to this appellation.

A poem is called dramatic, either in consequence of its form, the form I mean of a perfect dialogue, which is sustained entirely by the characters or personages without the intervention of the Poet; and this was the definition adopted by the ancient critics: or else, according to the more modern acceptance of the word, in consequence of a plot or fable being represented in it. If those who account the book of Job dramatic adhere to the former definition, I have little inclination to litigate the point; and indeed

the object of the controversy would scarcely be worth the labour. Though a critic, if disposed to be scrupulously exact, might insist that the work, upon the whole, is by no means a perfect dialogue, but consists of a mixture of the narrative and colloquial style: for the historical part, which is all composed in the person of the writer himself, is certainly to be accounted a part of the work itself, considered as a whole. Since, however, on the other hand, the historical or narrative part is all evidently written in prose, and seems to me to be substituted merely in the place of an argument or comment, for the purpose of explaining the rest, and certainly does not constitute any part of the poem; since, moreover, those short sentences, which serve to introduce the different speeches, contain very little more than the names, I am willing to allow, that the structure or form of this poem is on the whole dramatic. But this concession will, I fear, scarcely satisfy the critics in question; for they speak of the regular order and conduct of the piece, and of the dramatic catastrophe; they assert, that the interposition of the Deity is a necessary part of the machinery of the fable;

fable; they even enumerate the acts and scenes, and use the very same language in all respects, as if they spoke of a Greek Tragedy; insomuch, that when they term the Poem of Job dramatic¹, they seem to speak of that species of drama which was cultivated and improved in the theatre of Athens. It appears therefore a fair object of inquiry, whether the Poem of Job be possessed of the peculiar properties of the Greek drama, and may with reason and justice be classed with the theatrical productions of that people.

We have already agreed, that the greater and more perfect Drama is peculiarly distinguished from the lesser and more common species, inasmuch as it retains not only the dramatic form, or the perfect dialogue, but also exhibits some entire action, fable, or plot. And this is perfectly agreeable to the definition of Aristotle; for although he points out many parts or constituents in the composition of a Tragedy, he assigns the first

¹ See CALMET, *Preface sur Job*. HARE, Not. ad Ps. cvii. 40. CARPZOVII *Introduct. in Libros Biblicos*, part. ii. p. 76.

place to the plot or fable^a. This he says is the beginning, this the end, this is the most important part, the very soul of a Tragedy, without which it is utterly undeserving of the name, and indeed cannot properly be said to exist. A plot or fable is the representation of an action or event, or of a series of events or incidents tending all to one point, which are detailed with a view to a particular object or conclusion. A Tragedy, says the same author, is not a representation of men, but of actions, a picture of life, of prosperity and adversity: in other words, the business of the poem is not merely to exhibit manners only, nor does the most perfect representation of manners constitute a Tragedy; for in reality a Tragedy may exist with little or no display of manners or character, its business is to exhibit life and action, or some regular train of actions and events, on which depends the felicity or infelicity of the persons concerned. For human happiness or prosperity consists in action; and action is not a quality, but is the end of man. According to our manners we are denomi-

^a ARIST. Poet. cap. vi.

nated good or bad; but we are happy or unhappy, prosperous or unsuccessful, according to actions or events. Poets therefore do not form a plot or action merely for the sake of imitating manners or character; but manners and character are added to the plot, and for the sake of it are chiefly attended to. Thus far he has accurately drawn the line between the representation of action and that of manners. He adds, moreover, that unity is essential to a regular plot or action, and that it must be complete in itself, and of a proper length¹. But to comprehend more perfectly the nature of a plot or fable, it must be observed, that there are two principal

* ARIST. *Poet.* ch. vii. It is evident that the human mind can dwell on one object only at a time, and whenever it takes more into its view, it is by combination, as forming *one* object out of many, or as many objects contributing to *one* action. Painters observe this rule so minutely, that they will not suffer *attention* to be divided by two equal groups, by two principal figures, two equal lights or colours, or even two equal folds of drapery. I flatter myself in the above translation I have not obscured the meaning of Aristotle, so as to bring upon him the charge of inconsistency. When he speaks of unity being essential to a dramatic fable or action, he means it, I apprehend, as speaking of a whole. When, therefore, he

cial species: for they are either complex or simple⁴; the former contains some unexpected vicissitude of fortune, such as the recognition of a person at first unknown, the recovery of a lost child, or a sudden change in the situation of the parties, or perhaps both; the latter contains nothing of the kind, but proceeds in one uniform and equal tenour. In every plot or fable, however, be it ever so simple, and though it contain nothing of the wonderful or unexpected, there is always a perplexity or embarrassment, as also a regular solution or catastrophe⁵; the latter must proceed from the former, and indeed must depend upon it; which cannot be the case, unless there be a certain order or connexion in the incidents and events which inclines them towards the same end, and combines them all in one termination.

On fairly considering these circumstances, I have no hesitation in affirming, that the

speaks afterwards of plots or fables as simple or complex, by the latter term he must mean one plot or story, which consists of several incidents or vicissitudes; and by the former a plot founded upon one simple and uninterrupted action, and so our author indeed explains him. T.

⁴ ARIST. Poet. chap. x.

⁵ Ibid. chap. xviii.

Poem of Job contains no plot or action whatever, not even of the most simple kind; it uniformly exhibits one constant state of things, not the smallest change of fortune taking place from the beginning to the end; and it contains merely a representation of those manners, passions, and sentiments, which might actually be expected in such a situation. Job is represented as reduced from the summit of human prosperity, to a condition the most miserable and afflicted: and the sentiments of both Job and his friends are exactly such as the occasion dictates. For here a new temptation falls upon him, by which the constancy of Job is put to the severest trial; and this circumstance it is that constitutes the principal subject of the Poem. Job had, we find, endured the most grievous calamities, the loss of his wealth, the deprivation of his children, and the miserable union of poverty and disease, with so much fortitude and with so just a confidence in his own integrity, that nothing could be extorted from him in the least inconsistent with the strictest reverence for the Divine Being; he is now put to the proof, whether, after enduring all this with firmness and resignation,

signation, he can with equal patience endure to have his innocence and virtue (in which perhaps he had placed too much confidence) indirectly questioned, and even in plain terms arraigned. Job now sinking under the weight of his misery, laments his condition with more vehemence than before. His friends reprove his impatience, and drop some dark insinuations to the apparent disparagement of his virtue and integrity, by entering into very copious declamations concerning the justice of God in proportioning his visitations to the crimes of men. Job is still more violently agitated; and his friends accuse him with less reserve. He appeals to God, and expostulates with some degree of freedom. They urge and press him in the very heat of his passion; and, by still more malignant accusations, excite his indignation and his confidence, which were already too vehement. Elihu interposes as an arbiter of the controversy; he reproves the severe spirit of the friends, as well as the presumption of Job, who trusted too much in his own righteousness. Job receives his admonitions with mildness and temper, and being rendered more sedate by his expostulation, makes

makes no reply, though the other appears frequently to expect it. When the Almighty, however, condescends to set before him his rashness, frailty, and ignorance, he submits in perfect humility, and with sincere repentance. Here the temptation of Job concludes, in the course of which there was great reason to apprehend he would be totally vanquished : at the same time the Poem necessarily terminates, the state of things still remaining without any change or vicissitude whatever. The Poem indeed contains a great variety of sentiment, excellent representations of manners and character, remarkable efforts of passion, much important controversy ; but no change of fortune, no novelty of incident, no plot, no action.

If indeed we rightly consider, we shall, I dare believe, find that the very nature of the subject excludes even the possibility of a plot or action. From that state of settled and unvarying misery in which Job is involved, arises the doubt of his integrity, and those insinuations and criminations which serve to exasperate him, and by which he is stimulated to expostulate with God, and to glory in his own righteousness. It was proper, therefore,

therefore, that by a continuance of the same state and condition, he should be recalled to an humble spirit, and to a proper reverence for the Almighty Providence. For it would have been altogether contrary to what is called poetical justice, if he had been restored to prosperity previous to his submission and penitence. The repentance of Job, however, we find concludes the Poem. Nor was it at all necessary, that the question concerning the divine justice should be resolved in the body of the work, either by the fortunate issue of the affairs of Job, or even by the explication of the divine intentions: this, in fact, was not the primary object, nor does it at all constitute the subject of the Poem; but is subservient, or in a manner an appendage to it. The disputation which takes place upon this topic, is no more than an instrument of temptation, and is introduced in order to explain the inmost sentiments of Job, and to lay open the latent pride that existed in his soul. The Almighty, therefore, when he addresses Job, pays little regard to this point; nor indeed was it necessary, for neither the nature nor the object of the Poem required a defence of the Divine Providence,

Providence, but merely a reprehension of the over-confidence of Job.

If indeed we suppose any change to have taken place in the state of affairs, the nature and subject of the Poem will also be changed. If we connect with the poetical part either the former or the latter part of the history, or both, the subject will then be the display of a perfect example of patience in enduring the severest outward calamities, and at length receiving an ample reward at the hands of the Almighty : from this, however, the universal tenour of the Poem will be found greatly to differ. It will be found to exhibit rather the impatience of Job in bearing the reproaches and abuse of his pretended friends : and this appears to lead to the true object of the Poem ; for Job is irritated, he indulges his passion, he speaks too confidently of his own righteousness, and in too irreverend a style concerning the justice of God ; in the end, he is converted by the admonitions of Elihu, and the reproofs of his omnipotent Creator. The true object of the Poem appears therefore to be, to demonstrate the necessity of humility, of trust in God, and of the profoundest reverence for the

the divine decrees, even in the holiest and most exalted characters.

Should it be objected, that I have contended with a scrupulous perverseness concerning the meaning of a word; and should it after all be affirmed, that this very temptation of Job, this dispute itself possesses in some degree the form or appearance of an action: I am content to submit the trial to another issue, and to be judged by a fair investigation of the practice of the Greek Poets upon similar occasions. There is no necessity to remind this assembly, with how much art and design the fable or plot of the Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles appears to have been constructed; with what powers of imagination and judgment the process of the drama is conducted; and in what manner, by a regular succession of events, arising naturally from each other, the horrid secret is developed, which as soon as disclosed precipitates the hero of the Tragedy from the summit of human happiness into the lowest depths of misery and ruin. Let us only suppose Sophocles to have treated the same subject in a different manner, and to have formed a poem on that part of the story

4

alone

alone which is comprized in the last act. Here Oedipus would be indeed exhibited as an object of the most tender compassion; here would be a spacious field for the display of the most interesting and tragical affections: the fatal catastrophe would be deplored; the blindness, disgrace, exile of the hero, would enhance the distress of the scene; and to the bitterness of present calamity would be added the still more bitter remembrance of the past. The poet might copiously display the sorrow and commiseration of his daughters, his detestation of himself, and of all that belong to him; and more copiously, of those who had preserved him when exposed, who had supported and educated him: all these topics the Poet has slightly touched upon in these lines;

O curst Cithæron! why didst thou receive me?
Or when thou didst, how couldst thou not destroy me?

The succeeding passages are also extremely pathetic. These would easily admit of amplification, and, when the ardour of grief was a little abated, he might have added his vindication of himself, his asseverations of his

his innocence, his plea of ignorance, and fatal necessity, and his impassioned exclamations against Fortune and the Gods. From all this might be constructed a Poem, great, splendid, copious, diversified; and the subject would also furnish a topic of disputation not unlike that of Job. It might also assume in some measure the dramatic form; the same characters that appear in the Tragedy might be introduced; it might possess the exact proportions and all the requisites of a drama, fable alone excepted, which indeed constitutes the very essence of a Dramatic Poem, and without which all other qualities are of no avail: for the Greeks would have called such a production a Monody, or Elegiac Dialogue, or any thing but a Tragedy.

This opinion receives still further confirmation from the example and authority of Sophocles himself in another instance. For when he again introduces the same Oedipus upon the stage in another Tragedy, though the ground-work of the piece be nearly that which we have been describing, the conduct of it is totally different. This piece is called Oedipus Coloneus; the plot or fable is quite simple,

simple, on which account it is a fairer object of comparison with the Poem of Job than any the plot of which is more complex. Oedipus is introduced blind, exiled, and oppressed with misery: none of those circumstances above-mentioned have escaped the Poet; such as the lamentation of his misery, the passionate exclamations against Fate and the Gods, and the vindication of his innocence. These, however, do not form the basis of the Poem; they are introduced merely as circumstances, which afford matter of amplification, and which seem to flow from that elegant plot or action he has invented. Oedipus, led by his daughter, arrives at Colonus, there to die and be interred according to the admonition of the Oracle; for upon these circumstances the victory of the Athenians over the Thebans was made to depend. The place being accounted sacred, the Athenians are unwilling to receive him; but Theseus affords him refuge and protection. Another of his daughters is introduced, who informs him of the discord between her brothers, also that Creon is coming, with an intention of bringing him back to his own country in pursuance of a

decree of the Thebans. After this Creon arrives ; he endeavours to persuade Oedipus to return to Thebes ; and on his refusal, attempts to make use of violence. Theseus protects Oedipus : and in the mean time Polynices arrives, with a view of bringing over his father to his party in the war against the Thebans : this being the only condition on which he was to hope for victory. Oedipus refuses, and execrates his son in the severest terms : in conclusion, the answer of the Oracle being communicated to Theseus, Oedipus dies, and is secretly buried there. In this manner is constructed a regular, perfect, and important action or plot ; all the parts of which are connected together in one design, and tend exactly to the same conclusion, and in which are involved the fates of both Thebes and Athens. The manners, passions, characters, and sentiments, serve to adorn, but not to support the fable. Without any striking representation of these, the plot or action would still remain, and would of itself sustain the Tragedy ; but if the action be removed, though all the rest remain, it is evident that the Tragedy is totally annihilated.

From

From these observations it will, I think, be evident, that the Poem of Job cannot properly be brought into comparison with either Oedipus of Sophocles, or with any other of the Greek Tragedies. It will be evident, I think, that this Poem ought not to be accounted of the same kind; nor can possibly be classed with them, unless the whole nature and form of either the Greek or the Hebrew Poem be changed; or unless the plot or action be taken from the one, or added to the other: for without this great essential no Poem can indeed be accounted a perfect drama.

But though I have urged thus much against its claim to that title, let it not be understood that I wish to derogate from its merits. That censure will rather apply to those who, by criticising it according to foreign and improper rules, would make that composition appear lame and imperfect, which on the contrary is in its kind most beautiful and perfect. If indeed the extreme antiquity of this Poem, the obscurity and the difficulty that necessarily ensue from that circumstance be considered; and if allowance be made for the total want of plot

and action, we shall have cause to wonder at the elegance and interest which we find in its form, conduct, and economy. The arrangement is perfectly regular, and every part is admirably adapted to its end and design. The antiquary or the critic, who has been at the pains to trace the history of the Grecian drama from its first weak and imperfect efforts, and has carefully observed its tardy progress to perfection⁶, will scarcely, I think, without astonishment contemplate a Poem produced so many ages before, so elegant in its design, so regular in its structure, so animated, so affecting, so near to the true dramatic model: while, on the contrary, the united wisdom of Greece, after ages of study, was not able to produce any thing approaching to perfection in this walk of poetry before the time of Æschylus. But however this be—whatever rank may be assigned to Job, in a comparison with the Poets of Greece, to whom we must at least allow the merit of art and method; amongst the Hebrews, it must certainly be allowed, in this respect, to be unrivalled. It is of

⁶ See Note (2) on LECT. XXX.

little consequence whether it be esteemed a didactic or an ethic, a pathetic or dramatic Poem ; only let it be assigned a distinct and conspicuous station in the highest rank of the Hebrew Poetry.

LECTURE XXXIV.

OF THE MANNERS, SENTIMENTS, AND STYLE OF THE POEM OF JOB.

Though the Poem of Job do not contain a plot or fable, it possesses, nevertheless, some things in common with the perfect drama.—MANNERS or character.—The manners of Job; to be distinguished from the passions or emotions.—The opinion of Aristotle, that the character of extreme virtue is not proper for Tragedy, demonstrated to be neither applicable to Job, nor true with respect to Tragedy in general.—The design of the Poem.—The manners of the three friends: the gradations of passion more strongly marked in them than the diversity of manners.—Elibu.—The expostulation of God himself.—SENTIMENTS; expressive of things and of manners; the latter already noticed; the former consist partly of passion, partly of description: two examples of the softer passions: examples of description.—The STYLE of this Poem uncommonly elegant and sublime; and the poetic conformation of the sentences extremely correct.—Peroration, recommending the study of Hebrew literature.

WHEN I contended that the Poem of Job ought not to be accounted a true and regular drama, such as are the Tragedies of the Greeks, I was far from insinuating, that it did not possess the dramatic form. I not only allowed, that in its general

ral conduct and economy it exhibited a similitude, an anticipation as it were of genuine Tragedy; but that it contained also all the principal requisites of a dramatic Poem, fable alone excepted: of these the first and most important is, the imitation of manners or character.

The manners are what serve to mark or discriminate the different persons, who take a part in the action of the Poem, to declare and express each character's peculiar mode of speaking, thinking, and acting; and compose as it were the intellectual image of the man. The principal personage in this Poem is Job, and in his character is meant to be exhibited (as far as is consistent with human infirmity) an example of perfect virtue. This is intimated in the argument or introduction, but is still more eminently displayed by his own actions and sentiments. He is holy, devout, and most piously and reverently impressed with the sacred awe of his divine Creator; he is also upright, and conscious of his own integrity; he is patient of evil, and yet very remote from that insensibility or rather stupidity to which the Stoic school pretended. Oppressed therefore with

unparalleled misfortunes, he laments his misery, and even wishes a release by death; in other words, he obeys, and gives place to the dictates of nature: irritated, however, by the unjust insinuations, and the severe reproaches of his pretended friends, he is more vehemently exasperated, and the too great confidence in his own righteousness leads him to expostulate with God in terms scarcely consistent with piety and strict decorum.

It must be observed, that the first speech of Job, though it burst forth with all the vehemence of passion, consists wholly of complaint, "the words and sentiments of a "despairing person, empty as the wind";" which is indeed the apology that he immediately makes for his conduct; intimating, that he is far from presuming to plead with God, far from daring to call in question the divine decrees, or even to mention his own innocence in the presence of his all-just Creator: nor I do see any good reason for the censure which has been passed by some commentators upon this passage. The Poet,

Job vi. 26.

seems,

seems, with great judgment and ingenuity, to have performed in this what the nature of his work required. He has depicted the affliction and anguish of Job, as flowing from his wounded heart in a manner so agreeable to human nature (and certainly so far venial) that it may be truly said, "in all this Job "sinned not with his lips." It is, nevertheless, embellished by such affecting imagery, and inspired with such a warmth and force of sentiment, that we find it afforded ample scope for calumny; nor did the unkind witnesses of his sufferings permit so fair an opportunity to escape. The occasion is eagerly embraced by Eliphaz, to rebuke the impatience of Job; and, not satisfied with this, he proceeds to accuse him in direct terms of wanting fortitude, and obliquely to insinuate something of a deeper dye. Though deeply hurt with the coarse reproaches of Eliphaz, still, however, when Job afterwards complains of the severity of God, he cautiously refrains from violent expostulations with his Creator, and contented with the simple expression of affliction, he humbly confesses himself a sinner². Hence, I think,

² See chap. vii. 20.

it is evident, that those vehement and perverse attestations of his innocence, those murmurs against the divine Providence, which his tottering virtue afterwards permits, are to be considered merely as the consequences of momentary passion, and not as the ordinary effects of his settled character or manners. They prove him at the very worst not an irreligious man, but a man possessed of integrity, and too confident of it; a man oppressed with almost every imaginable evil, both corporal and mental, and hurried beyond the limits of virtue by the strong influence of pain and affliction. When, on the contrary, his importunate visitors abandon by silence the cause which they had so wantonly and so maliciously maintained; and cease unjustly to load him with unmerited criminations; though he defends his argument with scarcely less obstinacy; yet the vehemence of his grief appears gradually to subside, he returns to himself, and explains his sentiments with more candour and sedateness: and however we may blame him for assuming rather too much of arrogance in his appeals to the Almighty, certainly his defence against the accusations

cusations of Eliphaz, is no more than the occasion will strictly justify. Observe, in the first place, how admirably the confidence and perseverance of Job is displayed in replying to the slander of his false friends:

“ As God liveth, who hath removed my judgment;

“ Nay, as the Almighty liveth, who hath embittered my soul;

“ Verily as long as I have life in me,

“ And the breath of God is in my nostrils;

“ My lips shall not speak perversity,

“ Neither shall my tongue whisper prevarication.

“ God forbid that I should declare you righteous!

“ Till I expire I will not remove my integrity from me.

“ I have fortified myself in my righteousness,

“ And I will not give up my station;

“ My heart shall not upbraid me as long as I live.

“ May mine enemy be as the impious man,

“ And he that riseth up against me as the wicked.”

But how magnificent, how noble, how inviting and beautiful is that image of virtue, in which he delineates his past life! What dignity and authority does he seem to possess!

³ Chap. xxvii. 2—7.

“ If

- " If I came out to the gate, nigh the place of
 " public resort,
 " If I took up my seat in the street;
 " The young men saw me, and they hid them-
 " selves;
 " Nay, the very old men rose up and stood ⁴.
 " The princes refrained talking,
 " Nay, they laid their hands on their mouths.
 " The nobles held their peace,
 " And their tongue cleaved to the roof of their
 " mouth ⁵."

What liberality ! what a promptitude in beneficence !

- " Because the ear heard, therefore it blessed me ;
 " The eye also saw, therefore it bare testimony
 " for me.
 " That I delivered the poor who cried,
 " The orphan also, and him who had no helper.

⁴ " This is a most elegant description, and exhibits
 " most correctly that great reverence and respect which
 " was paid even by the old and decrepid to the holy man
 " in passing along the streets, or when he sat in public.
 " They not only rose, which in men so old and so infirm
 " was a great mark of distinction, but they stood : they
 " continued to do it, though even the attempt was so
 " difficult." H.

⁵ Chap. xxix. 7—10.

" The

“ The blessing of him who was ready to perish
“ came upon me,
“ And I caused the heart of the widow to sing
“ for joy⁶.”

What sanctity, what integrity in a judicial capacity!

“ I put on righteousness, and it clothed me like
“ a robe ;
“ My justice also was a diadem.
“ I was a father to the poor,
“ And the controversy which I knew not, I
“ searched it out.
“ Then brake I the grinders of the oppressor,
“ And I plucked the prey out of his teeth⁷.”

But what can be more engaging than the purity of his devotion, and his reverence for the Supreme Being, founded upon the best and most philosophical principles? Besides that through the whole there runs a strain of the most amiable tenderness and humanity:

“ For what is the portion which God distributeth
“ from above,
“ And the inheritance of the Almighty from on
“ high?

⁶ Chap. xxix. 11—13.

⁷ Chap. xxix. 14, 16, 17.

“ Is

"Is it not destruction to the wicked,
 "And banishment⁸ from their country to the
 "doers of iniquity?
 "Doth he not see my ways?
 "And numbereth he not all my steps?
 "If I should despise the cause of my servant,
 "Or my maid, when they had a controversy
 "with me,
 "What then should I do when God ariseth,
 "And when he visiteth, what answer could I
 "make him?
 "Did not he who formed me in the belly form
 "him,
 "And did not One fashion us in the womb?"⁹

Aristotle has remarked, that the example of a singularly good man falling from prosperous circumstances into misfortune, is by no means a proper subject for a Tragedy¹⁰;

⁸ "Abalienation: or reprobation, repudiation: so the
 "word signifies in the Arabic dialect. Abalienation
 "agrees with the SEPT. version, and perfectly expresses
 "the force of the Hebrew word." H.

This passage appears to have a manifest relation to the history of Nimrod and his adherents, and may be added to the others which have been already mentioned, in proof of their story having been one of the commonplace topics of the Hebrew Poets. S. H.

⁹ Chap. xxxi. 2—4. 13—15.

¹⁰ De Poet. cap. xiii.

since it is offensive and indecent rather than piteous or terrible". This remark, though consistent enough with the Greek drama, and with the sentiments and manners of the Heathens, is scarcely applicable to our Tragedy, and still less to the Poem of Job. "Pity," says the same author on another occasion, "is excited when adversity falls upon those who are undeserving of it." Great virtue therefore plunged into great misfortunes, so far from being an unsuitable subject, ought to be the most direct and proper means of moving compassion. "Terror" is excited by a representation of the misery of such persons as bear the nearest resemblance to ourselves: the misfortunes therefore of those, who are vicious in an extreme, are not much calculated to excite terror; but this is by no means the case with regard to the misery of such as are eminently good; for if we fear for ourselves when we see moderate virtue in affliction, much more,

"The opinion of Aristotle appears to be, that such a representation is calculated to excite our indignation (possibly against the Gods); and consequently that this passion is likely to counteract the sentiments of pity and terror. T.

surely,

surely, when a superior degree of it is in that state¹². It appears to me, therefore, that Aristotle was not of opinion, that the example of a very good man in extreme affliction is ill calculated to excite either pity or terror; but rather it is a spectacle likely to prove injurious to the cause of virtue, and therefore disgusting and detestable, and consequently unfit to be produced upon the stage. This opinion of the philosopher seems to result from an unjust and visionary estimation of human virtue, to repress which appears to have been the very design and object of the book of Job. The character of Job indeed, though approaching so near to the perfection of virtue, seems, notwithstanding, to have a considerable alloy of human infirmity, so as neither to want probability, nor to lose its

¹² “Men also pity their equals in age, manners, rank, situation, and birth; this indeed brings the evil nearer to themselves; and the obvious reflection is, that they are equally exposed to it: for it is an established maxim, that men pity others on the same accounts, and in the same proportion as they fear for themselves—especially if the sufferers be esteemed good men; for the misery is brought immediately before their eyes, and is consequently rendered more glaring and apparent.” ARIST. *Rhet.* ii. 8.

effect

effect in exciting terror. For if it be extreme wickedness in the most upright of men, when oppressed with the severest misery, to murmur at all against the divine justice, who then shall stand before God? Who shall expect to pass through the pilgrimage of life without his portion of evil and of sin? The end of the Poem is moreover by no means ill calculated to excite terror; since this moral is particularly inculcated in it, "Be not high-minded, but fear:" and Job himself sets before us, what impresson the example of his misfortunes ought to make upon our minds in this respect:

- "The upright will be astonished at this,
- "Then the innocent will surely rise up against
"the profligate;
- "The righteous man will also hold on his way,
- "And he that hath clean hands will gather
"strength."

The three friends are exactly such characters as the nature of the Poem required. They are severe, irritable, malignant censors, readily and with apparent satisfaction deviating from the purpose of consolation into re-

³³ Chap. xviii. 8, 9.

proof and contumely. Even from the very first they manifest this evil propensity, and indicate what is to be expected from them. The first of them, indeed, in the opening of his harangue, assumes an air of candour :

“ Wouldst thou take it unkindly that one should
“ essay to speak to thee ¹⁴ ?”

Indignation is, however, instantly predominant :

“ But a few words who can forbear ?”

The second flames forth at once :

“ How long wilt thou trifle in this manner ?

“ How long shall the words of thy mouth be as
“ a mighty wind ¹⁵ ?”

But remark the third :

“ Shall not the master of words be answered ?

“ Or shall a man be acquitted for his fine
“ speeches ?

“ Shall thy prevarications make men silent ;

“ Shalt thou even scoff, and there be no one to
“ make thee ashamed ¹⁶ ?”

¹⁴ Chap. iv. 2.

¹⁵ Chap. viii. 2.

¹⁶ Chap. xi. 2, 3.

They

They are represented as illiberal, contentious; inclined to torture every thing to the worst of purposes :

“ Doth God pervert judgment ?

“ Doth the Almighty pervert justice ” ?”

Where observe, Job has not as yet uttered an intemperate expression in disparagement of the divine justice.

“ Nay, thou castest off fear,

“ And thou restrainest prayer before God ”¹⁸ :”

Such is the invective of the other of them. They are also proud, contemptuous, and arrogant too much to their own wisdom :

“ Why are we accounted as beasts ;

“ Why are we vile in your eyes ?

“ Let him tear himself in his fury ;

“ What, shall the earth be forsaken for thee ”¹⁹ ?

Or

¹⁷ Chap. viii. 3.

¹⁸ Chap. xv. 4.

¹⁹ “ So the LXX. *What ! if thou diest, shall the whole earth be desolate ?* Which version, or rather paraphrase, is most elegant, and in my opinion finely accommodated to the purpose of the sacred writer. When the Orientals would reprove the pride or arrogance of any person, it is common for them to desire him to call to mind how little and contemptible he and every mortal is, in these or similar apothegms ;

" Or shall the rock be outrooted from its place?
 " Rather let the light of the wicked be extin-
 " guished ²⁰."

Nor is Zophar, who takes up the subject
 after Bildad, more modest :

" Verily the impulse of my thoughts incite me
 " to reply,
 " Even because there is some resentment within
 " me :
 " I hear the ignominious reproof that is aimed
 " at me,
 " And the spirit within me compels me to
 " answer ²¹."

The conduct of all these malicious censors
 is much the same through the whole piece.

" What though Mahammed were dead ?
 " His *Imauns* (or ministers) conducted the affairs of the
 " nation.

" The universe shall not fall for his sake.

" The world does not subsist for one man alone.

" Nay, this very phrase is still in use among the Arabic
 " writers, עֲוֹבַת אֶרֶץ, " the earth is desolate." Got.
 col. 1570. H.

²⁰ Chap. xviii. 3—5.

²¹ Chap. xx. 2, 3.
 Eliphaz

Eliphaz indeed, who begins in the mildest terms, descends afterwards to the severest reproaches; and he directly charges Job with the most atrocious offences: from which intemperance of language, it must be confessed, the others refrain. Bildad, not to be silent, repeats in a brief and florid manner the subject, which had already been twice treated of by the others, namely, the majesty and holiness of God; and Zophar, withdrawing from the contest, deserts entirely the cause of his companion, and leaves the field to Job. The business of defamation indeed seems, with great propriety, committed to three persons. It would have been too confined and trivial in the hands of one; and, amongst a croud of accusers, too confused and clamorous. There appears, however, but little difference in the manners of the three friends; for in them the poet has rather studied to display the progress of the passions, than any diversity of character. But though the nice and fastidious criticism of the moderns demand variety in this respect, the simplicity of infant Poetry will be excused by every person of real judgment; and I think this deficiency (if such it may be called) is amply

compensated by the gravity and importance of the subject and sentiments.

The lenity and moderation of Elihu serves as a beautiful contrast to the intemperance and asperity of the other three. He is pious, mild, and equitable; equally free from adulation and severity; and endued with singular wisdom, which he attributes entirely to the inspiration of God: and his modesty, moderation, and wisdom, are the more entitled to commendation when we consider his unripe youth. As the characters of his detractors were in all respects calculated to inflame the mind of Job; that of this arbitrator is admirably adapted to sooth and compose it: to this point the whole drift of the argument tends, and on this the very purport of it seems to depend.

The interposition of the Deity, and its connexion with the general design of the Poem, I have formerly noticed. I will only add, that although some critics have really thought the whole address inconsistent, and foreign to the subject, no man has ever accounted it in any respect unworthy of that supreme Majesty to which it is ascribed.

Another

Another circumstance deserving particular attention in a Poem of this kind, is the sentiment; which must be agreeable to the subject, and embellished with proper expression. It is by Aristotle enumerated among the essentials of a Dramatic Poem; not indeed as peculiar to that species of Poetry alone, but as common, and of the greatest importance to all. Manners or character are essential only to that poetry in which living persons are introduced; and all such Poems must afford an exact representation of human manners: but sentiment is essential to every Poem, indeed to every composition whatever. It respects both persons and things; as far as it regards persons, it is particularly concerned in the delineation of the manners and passions: and those instances to which I have just been adverting, are sentiments expressive of manners. Those which relate to the delineation of the passions, and to the description of other objects, yet remain unnoticed in this Lecture. As I formerly, however, treated of these subjects in general, I could scarcely avoid producing some examples from this Poem; for in demonstrating the power of the poetic diction in exciting the passions, I could not

possibly deduce my instances from a better source²². On the present occasion, therefore, I shall study brevity, and avoid as much as possible the tediousness of repetition.

The Poem of Job abounds chiefly in the more vehement passions, grief and anger, indignation and violent contention. It is adapted in every respect to the incitement of terror; and, as the specimens already quoted will sufficiently prove, is universally animated with the true spirit of sublimity. It is however not wanting in the gentler affections; the following complaints, for instance, are replete with an affecting spirit of melancholy:

“ Man, the offspring of a woman,
“ Is of few days, and full of inquietude;
“ He springeth up, and is cut off like a flower;
“ He fleeteth like a shadow, and doth not abide:
“ Upon such a creature dost thou open thine
“ eyes?
“ And wilt thou bring even me into judgment
“ with Thee?
“ Turn thy look from him, that he may have
“ some respite,

²² See LECT. xiv. xvi. xvii.

“ Till

“ Till he shall, like a hireling, have completed²³
 “ his day²⁴.”

The whole passage abounds with the most beautiful imagery, and is a most perfect specimen of the Elegiac. His grief afterwards becomes more fervent; but is at the same time soft and querimonious.

“ How long will ye vex my soul,
 “ And tire me with vain harangues?
 “ These ten times have ye loaded me with re-
 “ proaches,
 “ Are ye not ashamed that ye are so obstinate
 “ against me²⁵?

“ Pity

²³ “ Or until he *shall acquiesce* : or *shall make satisfaction*
 “ (the original will bear either interpretation); for the
 “ word in the Arabic dialect sometimes signifies, *He did*
 “ *or afforded to another, what he held to be agreeable to him-*
 “ *self.*” H.

²⁴ Chap. xiv. 1, 2, 3, 6.

²⁵ “ I think the word חזק occurs but this once in the
 “ Scriptures and (as is my usual practice when I meet with
 “ any such words or phrases), I consulted the Arabic Lexi-
 “ cographers. They explain it by two other words, the
 “ one is עב to *admire*, the other is חזק to *wonder, to be*
 “ *astonished.* Whence חזק to *wonder in amazement (to be*
 “ *overcome with astonishment,* as GIGGEIUS explains it)
 “ and the sense of the passage will be, *are you not ashamed*

“ to

" Pity me, O pity me, ye are my friends,
 " For the hand of God hath smitten me.
 " Why will you be my persecutors as well as
 " God,
 " And therefore will ye not be satisfied with my
 " flesh ²⁶?"

That self-indulgence which is so natural to the passion of Hope; its ingenuity in drawing pictures of future felicity; its credulity in cherishing these ideas, and the gaiety and elevation of mind with which it describes them, are finely expressed by Job in the passage immediately following the relation of his past life:

" Therefore I said I shall die in my nest;
 " I shall multiply my days like the sand:
 " My root was spread abroad nigh the waters,
 " And the dew lay all night on my branches:

" to gaze at me. KIMCHI says, his father affirmed, that
 " the word הכר signifies in Arabic *impudence* or *forward-*
 " *ness*; I do not however find this interpretation con-
 " firmed by the Lexicons which I have consulted. But
 " still if we suppose, that the word הזהר is derived
 " from נהר, the explication of Kimchi may be accepted;
 " but the form of the verb will be anomalous. It is
 " however safest perhaps to adhere to the common tran-
 " slation." H.

²⁶ Chap. xix. 2, 3, 21, 22.

" My

- “ My glory was fresh within me,
“ And my bow gained strength in my hand.
“ They hearkned to me; nay they waited for
“ me;
“ They were silent also, they approved my
“ counsel.
“ After I had spoken they replied not;
“ For my words dropped upon them :
“ They waited also for me as the rain ;
“ And their mouths were open as for the latter
“ rain ²⁷.”

To this part of the subject, which relates to the delineation of the passions, may be referred those delicate touches which animate almost every description, and which are drawn from the most intimate knowledge of the genuine emotions of the human soul. I shall content myself with one example out of the many which the compass of the work affords. It is exactly copied from Nature; for when events take place according to our ardent wishes, but quite contrary to our expectations, we have the utmost difficulty to believe them real. Job thus expresses himself respecting God :

²⁷ Chap. xxix. 11—23.

“ If

“ If I called upon him and he should answer me,
 “ Yet could I scarcely believe that he had heard
 “ my voice ²⁸.”

This is admirably expressive both of the majesty of God, and of the severity which he exercised towards Job ; it is also no less descriptive of the humiliation and despair of the sufferer.

“ If I were merry with them they would not believe it ²⁹ :”

says Job of his dependants ; in which is expressed his own dignity and gravity united with urbanity, and at the same time their unviolated attachment to him. Thus too, by the same circumstance is depicted both the ardour and alacrity of the war-horse, and his eagerness for the battle :

“ For eagerness and fury he devoureth the very
 “ ground,

“ He believeth it not when he heareth the
 “ trumpet.

“ When the trumpet soundeth, he saith, ahah !

“ Yea he scenteth the battle from afar,

“ The thunder of the chieftains and their
 “ shouts ³⁰.”

²⁸ Chap. ix. 16.

²⁹ Chap. xxix. 24.

³⁰ Chap. xxxix. 24, 25.

This passage, which has indeed always attracted general admiration, will also serve to exemplify the excellence of the descriptive parts of this poem : and from the same circumstance we may fairly conjecture, that the pictures, which are exhibited in other parts of the work, would appear no less striking resemblances of the realities, were we equally well acquainted with the originals. To judge rightly of a description, we ought to have as clear and distinct ideas of the thing itself as the author. The idea of thunder is familiar to all mankind ; observe, therefore, how it is depicted by Elihu :

“ At this my heart trembleth,
 “ And is ready to bound from its place.
 “ Harken attentively, and tremble at his voice;
 “ Even at the sound that goeth out of his mouth.
 “ Its flash is beneath the whole heavens,
 “ And its blaze to the ends of the earth.
 “ After it a voice roareth ;
 “ He thundereth with the voice of his majesty :
 “ He deceiveth them not when his voice is
 “ heard ”.

It

“ That is, “ they cannot mistake his voice for any
 “ thing beside.” HEATH. JOB, chap. xxxviii. 1—4.

In

It would be superfluous to insist any longer on a minute detail, since the most splendid examples of every beauty and elegance of sentiment, of imagery, and of diction, meet the eye of the attentive reader in every part of the Poem. Let it suffice to say, that the dignity of the style is answerable to that of

In the last line it seems as if we should read *app* (he will not deceive) with the VULG. and SYMMACHUS. For this correction I am indebted to the learned RICHARD GREY, who has paid a very critical attention to this Poem.

“ The true sense is perhaps, *he does it not at intervals or by fits*, i. e. *thunders, &c.* but *continually*: which, among others, is the sense of the word in the Arabic dialect. And the exposition of R. L. B. GERSHOM, *he does not defer, or delay*, agrees very well with this opinion; as well as our common English translation, which is thus far preferable to that of the VULGATE and SYMMACHUS, namely, that it requires no change of the text. This also, in all probability, is the meaning of the Septuagint version, *Ουκ αναλαβει αυτος*; though this seems to relate to the hearers, when in reality it should relate to the things heard.” H.

Author's Note.

“ See whether the verb (*shemang*) be ever construed with *beth*, except in the sense *obeying*, which does not agree with the context in this place. It seems better therefore to construe the verb with *kolu*, and to render the sentence in this manner—*Hear his voice attentively, and with trembling.*” H.

the subject ; its force and energy to the greatness of those passions which it describes : and as this production excels all the other remains of the Hebrew Poetry in economy and arrangement, so it yields to none in sublimity of style, and in every grace and excellence of composition. Among the principal of these may be accounted the accurate and perfectly poetical conformation of the sentences, which is indeed generally most observable in the most ancient of the poetical compositions of the Hebrews. Here, however, as is natural and proper in a poem of so great length and sublimity, the writer's skill is displayed in the proper adjustment of the period, and in the accurate distribution of the members, rather than in the antithesis of words, or in any laboured adaptation of the parallelisms.

HAVING now gone through the several topics, of which I purposed to treat in my investigation of the nature of the Hebrew Poetry, it is time that my present undertaking should draw towards a conclusion. If in the prosecution of my design, I have by my industry been able to accomplish any thing that may be deemed satisfactory, it is
but

but common justice to attribute the greatest part of my success to you, Gentlemen, who have condescended to look with a propitious eye upon my endeavours, and to invigorate my application by your attention and partiality. When, indeed, I first meditated this system of instruction, I foresaw, as well from the native sublimity and obscurity of the subject, as from the extreme antiquity of the Hebrew writings, much subtile investigation, much difficult explication, much doubtful assertion, and dangerous error. I foresaw too, and daily experience confirmed my apprehensions, that in this maze of science, the vestiges and the documents of the learned would be frequently found but imperfect guides. That my courage did not utterly forsake me in the course of my undertaking, is to be attributed entirely to the favour and encouragement which I received from you. I had the satisfaction to find my plan meet with the approbation of some of the greatest and most eminent characters in the learned world, as being neither inconsistent with the design of this institution, the dignity of this University, nor the profit and utility of the students. I had often the singular pleasure

sure of seeing, among my auditors, many persons, to whom it would better become me to apply for instruction in this and in every other branch of literature; and the young men, for whose benefit this institution was established, I have found ever diligent and constant in their attendance: all which testimonies of your favour, unless I accounted as obligations, I should think either too arrogantly of myself, or too disrespectfully of you. To all of you, therefore, I feel, and shall for ever feel myself obliged: the remembrance of your kindness will, in every vicissitude of my condition, be pleasing to me; nor is there any danger of my suffering that to escape my memory, which I must ever esteem the great ornament of my life.

But to return to a point which is of more importance, and which has indeed been the principal object of all my endeavours. I should now think myself called upon, in the last place, to exhort this assembly of accomplished youths to an assiduous application to these studies; but that I confess I think you rather demand commendation than advice. For the Hebrew language, which was for a series of years in a manner obsolete and neglect-

ed, has been lately cultivated by you with such attention and application, and has obtained so respectable a place among the other branches of erudition, that it seems, through your means, to have recovered, after a tedious exile, all its former dignity and importance. Proceed, therefore, in the same career with the same ardour and success, and consider it as a work worthy of your utmost exertions to illustrate and cultivate this department of literature. You will find it no less elegant and agreeable, than useful and instructive; abounding in information no less curious for its extent and variety, than for its great importance and venerable sanctity; deserving the attention of every liberal mind; essential to all who would be proficient in theology: a branch of literature, in a word, which will confer credit upon yourselves, will be an honour to the university, and an advantage to the church. I congratulate you, Gentlemen, on having an Instructor³², who, from his authority, example, assiduity, and information, will be found in no respect wanting to your profit and accommodation:

³² Dr. THOMAS HUNT, King's Professor of Hebrew, and Laudian Professor of the Arabic language.

a Gentleman no less eminent for his abilities and profound erudition, than for the candour, urbanity, and gentleness of his manners. He will unfold to you the inexhaustible treasures of Oriental literature, he will open to your view an unbounded field of science and of fame. It is sufficient for me to have discovered to you a few of the more delightful retreats of this paradise: and could I flatter myself that my endeavours have been so fortunate as to allure or excite any to these studies, or even to stimulate and keep alive your attention to this department of literature, I should think that I had received the most honourable, the most grateful reward of my labours.

A BRIEF
C O N F U T A T I O N
O F
B I S H O P H A R E ' S
SYSTEM OF HEBREW METRE.

IT is well known, that an hypothesis was invented by the late Bishop Hare concerning the Hebrew metres; and the arguments, which he had advanced in its favour, appeared so conclusive to some persons of great erudition, as to persuade them, that the learned prelate had fortunately revived the knowledge of the true Hebrew versification, after an oblivion of more than two thousand years; and that he had established his opinion by such irresistible proofs, as to place it beyond the utmost efforts of controversy. Whoever, indeed, encounters it in such a manner, as only to call in question some particular part, to intimate only an occasional scruple, or to attack but one or two of his arguments, will, doubtless, “ attempt in
“ vain

“ vain † to root out of their minds an opi-
 “ nion which has been so deeply implanted
 “ and established by the authority of so
 “ great a man : much less will any person
 “ obtain credit who shall affirm, that he has
 “ discovered what was not discovered by the
 “ learned Prelate, unless by the strongest
 “ arguments he not only overthrows the
 “ hypothesis which he rejects, but confirms
 “ his own. Avoiding therefore every sub-
 “ terfuge, I shall come immediately to the
 “ point, and demonstrate by the clearest and
 “ most decisive instances, which is the only
 “ method of extorting assent from the incre-
 “ dulous, that I have actually discovered the
 “ nature and principles of this poetry,” and
 those directly contrary to the system which
 he has adopted. I shall, on this occasion,
 make use of the same example that Bishop
 Hare himself has chosen ; which, when pro-
 perly considered, will, I think, sufficiently
 explain and prove my opinion ; and at the
 same time effectually overturn his hypo-
 thesis.

† See Hare's Preface to the Psalms, at the beginning.

P S A L M CXI.

1. odéh javóh becól lebáb, i.
2. besód jesárim véyedáh.
3. gédolím mayasé javóh, ii.
4. dérusím lecól chepzéhem.
5. hód vehádar póyaló, iii.
6. vezidkathó yomédeth láyad.
7. zecér yafáh leníphlotháv; iv.
8. chánun vérachúm javóh.
9. téreph náthan líreáv, v.
10. jízcor léyolám berítho.
11. coách mayasáv higíd leyámo, vi.
12. dathéth lahém nachálath góim.
13. mayasé jadáv eméth umíspat; vii.
14. neemánim cól pikdúav :
15. semúcim láyad léyolám, viii.
16. yáfuím beeméth vejásar.
17. pedúth falách leyámo, ix.
18. zívah léyolám berítho.
19. kâdof vénorá semó; x.
20. resíth chocmáh jiráth javoh.
21. fécel tób lecól yoséhem, xi.
22. tehíllathó yomédeth láyad.

From this alphabetic Psalm, which is divided into its proper verses according to the initial letters, and restored to its proper numbers without any violation of the text, without even any change of the Masoretic vowels (except that with Bishop Hare, I read *javob*) the canons of the Hebrew metre are to be collected and established.

I. ² In the first place then, in the Hebrew Poetry the feet are not all dissyllables: for in verse 3, 11, 16.—*lím maya—cóach*

² The following are the principal rules or canons of Bishop Hare:

1. In Hebrew Poetry all the feet are two syllables.
2. No regard is paid to the quantity of the syllables.
3. When the number of the syllables is even, the verse is Trochaic, placing the accent on the first syllable.
4. If the number of syllables be odd, they are to be accounted Iambics, and the accent is to be placed on the second syllable, in order to preserve the rythm.
5. The periods mostly consist of two verses, often three or four, and sometimes more.
6. The verses of the same period, with few exceptions, are of the same kind.
7. The Trochaic verses mostly agree in the number of feet: there are however a few exceptions.
8. In the Iambic verses the feet are mostly unequal, though in some instances they are equal.
9. Each verse does not contain a distinct sense.

See HARE'S *Pref.* p. 27.

maya—ím be—are Dactyls; in verse 13, 14, mayasé, neemá—are Anapæsts: contrary to the first canon of Bishop Hare.

II. Attention must always be paid to the quantity of the syllables, for the same word, as often as it occurs, is always of the same quantity; for instance, javóh, lecól, are constantly Iambics, láyad is always a Trochaic, mayasé an Anapæst; lévolám is uniformly an Amphimafer: berítho, yomédeh, is an Amphibrachis: contrary to the second canon of Bishop Hare.

III. The verses are either Trochaic, which admit a Dactyl; or Iambic, which admit an Anapæst; but it by no means follows, that a verse is either the one or the other, from its consisting of an even or odd number of syllables. Those indeed which consist of an even number of syllables, are, for the most part, Iambic, as verse 1, 2, 7, 13, 14, 15, 20; but they are also sometimes Trochaic, as verse 3, 4, 10, 18, 21; and those which consist of an odd number of syllables are mostly Trochaic, as verse 5, 8, 9, 11, 16, 19; they are however sometimes Iambic, as verse 6, 12, 17, 22: contrary to the third and fourth canon.

IV.

IV. The verses of the same period are of different kinds; period iii, iv, vi, viii, ix, x, xi. a few only excepted, as period i, ii, v, vii; and those which are of the same kind seldom agree in the number of syllables and feet: for instance, in period ii, and v. the first verse is a Trochaic Dimeter Catalectic, the second a Trochaic Dimeter Acatalectic; in period vii. the first is an Iambic Dimeter Hypercatalectic, the second an Iambic Dimeter Catalectic: the only instance of verses agreeing in kind, agreeing also in syllables and feet is in period i. and those are Iambics: and this is contrary to the sixth, seventh, and eighth canons.

V. All the periods consist of only two verses; for properly *koph* and *resh* constitute the penultimate, and *shin* and *tau* the ultimate period; as also appeared to the learned Cappell³: this is contrary to the fifth canon.

VI. Each verse has one particular sense: contrary to the ninth canon.

“ That what I have advanced as true and
 “ indisputable, is most true, appears from
 “ the examples which I have adduced; and

³ See CAPPELL. Crit. Sac. lib. i. cap. xii. ii.

“ whoever reads attentively the book of
 “ Psalms, will find similar instances in al-
 “ most every page *.”

Since

* See Hare's Preface, p. 31. The reader has doubtless observed, that to establish our two last Canons, and perhaps the others, a general proposition is deduced from a particular instance: viz. so it is in this Psalm, and so, therefore it must be in all Hebrew Poems whatever; in this, however, I only copy Bishop Hare; for to say the truth, upon this mode of reasoning, and begging the question at the same time, depends his whole hypothesis.

I find these observations have greatly displeased Dr. THOMAS EDWARDS, a strenuous advocate for Bishop Hare's Metres. Towards the conclusion of his Dissertation lately published he asserts, that I did not understand what I presumed to censure: and to this accusation I indeed plead guilty. For I will freely confess, that I neither did understand, nor do I yet understand what metre can exist without any distinction of long and short syllables, or what can be meant by Trochaic, Iambic, and Anacreontic feet and verses, where no regard is paid to the quantity of the syllables. Nor do I understand any better, what purpose the confutation of my hypothesis can answer, since I gave it myself as futile and false, and since the futility of it was one of the strongest arguments against the hypothesis of Hare. This argument can only be done away by proving, that my hypothesis is not founded upon the same, or upon principles equally clear and certain with Bishop Hare's: this unfortunately his defender has not done, nor indeed can he do.

With

Since this is the case, since I have deduced happily the abstruse principles of the Hebrew

With regard to his accusation, that I have acted dogmatically, and that I have upon my own authority, and without any regard to reason affirmed, that the hypothesis of Bishop Hare depends altogether upon his taking for granted the very point to be proved; in order to exonerate myself from so invidious an imputation, and in order to confirm what I before had advanced, I must request the reader's attention to the following particulars.

The cxith Psalm is proposed as an example, and is divided into verses, whence the laws of Hebrew versification are to be deduced. We grant that in this Psalm the verses are rightly distinguished, since it is alphabetical, and the members of each period are nearly equal. But what is this to the establishment of a certain rule for the division of others, which are neither alphabetical, nor seem capable of a regular and equal distribution of the sentences and members? Indeed, such is the difficulty of Bishop Hare's hypothesis in this respect, that according to it a number of the Psalms are divided, not only arbitrarily and oddly, but inelegantly, injudiciously, contrary to the genius of the Hebrew Poetry, and contrary to every appearance of truth. We will take for an example the first Psalm, on which the author prides himself not a little. But when divided into verses, by what rule is it accented? Why in this rather than any other manner? How is it proved, that when the number of syllables is even, the verse is Trochaic, when odd, Iambic? From the nature and principles of Trochaic and Iambic verse? By no means—(for in the Greek and Latin Trochaics and Iambics, the case is directly contrary) but merely from the pleasure

brew metre from this Psalm, or rather explained clearly such as readily presented themselves,

pleasure and will of the author. Why then may not I, or any other person, affix different accents to this exith or any other Psalm, and so turn the Trochaics of Bishop Hare into Iambics, and his Iambics into Trochaic? By what rule too are the syllables numbered? According to the Masoretic punctuation? By no means: for the Masoretic number of syllables is altered, and that, as by a previous rule, or according to an established system of metre, which existed before the punctuation; as from this Psalm so ordered and illustrated, the rules of metre are afterwards to be collected. "But I do not desert the Masoretic punctuation, unless an erroneous punctuation interferes with the metre." This would be a sound argument, if it were previously determined what these rules of metre were. But for what good reason are all trisyllabic metres excluded from the Hebrew Poetry? "Because truly, if the trisyllabic feet were admitted, a distinction of long and short syllables would have place necessarily in the Hebrew Poetry." And why should it not? "In Hebrew Poetry there is no respect at all to the quantity of the syllables." A most extraordinary assertion, and scarcely credible! But that so it might be, learn from the testimony of your eyes and ears. "For from this Psalm it is evident, that no regard is paid to quantity in the Hebrew Poetry; since in the 4th and 5th verses, not to mention other instances, the *le* and *ve* are long. On the other hand, in the fifteenth and twenty-second, *mu* in *semucion*, and *hil* in *tehillatha*, are short." That is, according to Hare, the shortest syllable may be made use of instead of the longest (such indeed

selves, and have reduced them to an art easy, perfect, and consistent ; depending upon principles certain and self-evident : but not taking those liberties in which Bishop Hare has prolixly indulged himself, so as to make the same word sometimes Trochaic, sometimes Iambic, sometimes a Diffyllable, and sometimes a Trisyllable ; I may reasonably indulge myself in the hope, that the candid reader will prefer my hypothesis to that of Bishop Hare. This at least I trust I may expect,

deed he acknowledges them to be) in his Trochaic and Iambic measures ; and on the other hand, the longest may be introduced instead of the shortest : of which this Psalm affords the precedent : and on the authority of this precedent, a law is framed to serve in all other cases : and when we ask, upon other evidence, the reason of the fact, he refers us to his own authority and his own example. For, indeed, says he, this is the plain state of the case ; “ that this, and all that I have urged upon this subject, “ is undoubtedly fact, is plain from the examples which “ I have produced ; and must strike every reasonable person who only looks into a single page of the book of “ Psalms.” I confess it, indeed, most learned Prelate, if we look into your Psalms : but I fear we shall then be very little nearer the truth ; since it is by no means a decided point, that your Psalms are rightly and judiciously divided into verses, feet, and syllables.

See “ A larger Confutation of Bishop Hare's Hebrew “ Metres, in a Letter to Dr: EDWARDS, Lond. 1764.”

Author's Note.

that

that he will treat them upon equal terms, and allow to each the same authority, that is —NONE AT ALL.

In the same manner every hypothesis, which pretends to define the laws of Hebrew metre, and to prescribe the numbers, the feet, the scanning of the lines, may, I think, be easily overfet: for to that hypothesis another directly contrary, yet confirmed by arguments equally forcible, may, I am persuaded, be successfully opposed.

With regard to the opinion of those who suppose the whole art of Hebrew metre to consist in a similarity of terminatoin to each verse; though it has acquired some popularity and authority in the learned world, I think it by far the most ill-founded of all; and I think its absurdity so obvious, that with the utmost ease it may be detected. Since the endings of the verses are defined in some of the alphabetical Poems, and since it is manifest, that in these the verses do not end alike, that no art or attention has been bestowed upon that point, it follows of course that the art of Hebrew versification does not consist in making verses with similar endings.

APPEN-

A P P E N D I X,

Referred to from Page 31.

P S A L M CXXXV.

ΠΡΟΑΕΜΑ, or *Prelude*. Part 1.

High Priest and Priests, to the Levites:

Praise ye Jah!

Levites, to the Priests:

Praise ye the name Jehovah!

Priests and Levites, to the Congregation:

Praise him, O ye servants of Jehovah!

The Congregation, to the Priests:

Ye, that stand in the house of Jehovah!

The Congregation, to the Levites:

In the courts of the house of our God!

ΠΡΟΑΕΜΑ. 2.

Priests, to the Levites:

Praise ye Jah, for Jehovah is good.

Levites, to the Congregation:

Sing praises unto his name, for it is pleasant.

Congregation, joining both Priests and Levites:

For Jah hath chosen Jacob unto himself,

Israel for his peculiar treasure.

H Y M N.

High Priest, followed by the Priests:

For I know that Jehovah is great,

Even our Lord above all gods.

Levites:

Whatsoever Jehovah pleased,

He did in heaven, and in earth,

In the seas, and in deep places:

Congregation:

Congregation :

He causeth the vapours to rise from the ends of the earth,

He maketh lightnings for the rain :

He bringeth the wind out of his treasures.

High Priest, accompanied by the Priests :

Who smote the first-born of Egypt,

Both of man and of beast.

Levites :

Sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt :

Congregation :

Upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants.

High Priest and Priests :

Who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings :

Levites :

Sihon, king of the Amorites,

And Og, king of Basan,

And all the kingdoms of Canaan.

Congregation :

And he gave their land an heritage,

An heritage with Israel his people.

Priests :

Thy name, O Jehovah, endureth for ever.

Levites :

Thy memorial, O Jehovah, throughout all generations.

Priests, Levites, and Congregation in full chorus :

For Jehovah will judge his people ;

And will repent him concerning his servants.

II.

High Priest, accompanied by the Priests :

The idols of the Heathen—silver and gold !

The work of mortal hands.

Levites :

They have mouths, but they speak not ;

Eyes have they, but they see not.

Congregation :

They have ears, but they hear not :

Neither is there any truth in their mouths.

Levites :

Priests, Levites, and Congregation in full chorus:

*They that make them are like unto them;
Every one that trusteth in them.*

ΑΥΤΙΦΩΝΟΙΣ.

High Priest and Priests, to the Congregation:

Bless Jehovah, O house of Israel!

Congregation, to the High Priest and Priests:

Bless Jehovah, O house of Aaron!

High Priest and Priests, to the Levites:

Bless Jehovah, O house of Levi!

Levites, to High Priest and Priests:

Ye that fear Jehovah, bless Jehovah!

Priests, Levites, and Congregation, in full chorus:

*Blessed be Jehovah out of Sion,
Who dwelleth in Jerusalem!*

Full chorus, continuing each division to both the rest:

Praise ye, Jah!

The praising the name JEHOVAH, so often mentioned in Scripture, arises from the answer to the question of Moses. EXOD. iii.

13. S. H.



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